

THE CALGARY STAMPEDE

A story of the Canadian Plains

BASED ON THE MOTION PICTURE STORY

By RAYMOND L. SCHROCK



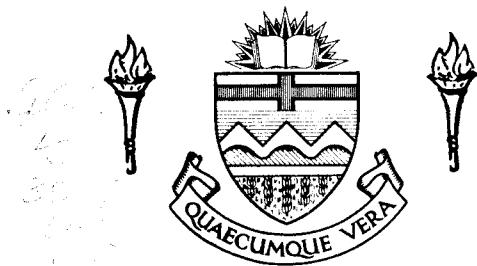
Starring
HOOT GIBSON



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Based on the Motion Picture Story

by

RAYMOND L. SCHROCK

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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

**Produced and Filmed by
Universal Pictures Corporation**

starring

HOOT GIBSON



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Publishers
1440 BROADWAY, NEW YORK**

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THE CALGARY STAMPEDE

CHAPTER I

ADVENTURE

WANDERLUST, hunger, curiosity, employment and the effort to avoid it have driven men into all corners of the earth; the spirit of adventure and that alone had brought Dan Malloy to Wainright Park. But the beautiful eyes of Marie La Farge had kept him there. And they were beautiful. There was no gainsaying that. Others had thought so, many of them. The purest blood of old France, pioneer settlers, adventurous trappers and traders, coquettish and brave women, flowed in her veins. The La Farges had not intermingled with the other nationalities that had won for Canada a mighty empire in the West. They were proud of this, proud and jealous to maintain it.

Jean La Farge had married a beautiful French woman, as had all his ancestors. Together they had come to Wainright Park, and together they had made the ranch the tidy little home that it was. Together, too, they had looked forward to a ripe old age with their children

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about them. But the two sons had never come back from the war, and the shock of their death, though it was for their dear France, was too much for the loving mother. And Jean, aged before his time, was left alone with the motherless Marie.

At nineteen Marie was the belle of Alberta. The far riding gentry, the hunters, trappers, cowboys and the Indians all gave her the palm for beauty. Her eyes were great wells of limpid emotion, seldom aroused, but eloquent of coquetry, steadfastness, daring and love. Shaded with the longest of lashes, their every accent was emphasized by that delightful uncertainty that a French woman knows so well how to use.

Her hair was raven black with a tantalizing suggestion of wave which relieved the oval face from the madonnalike look it had so often worn since her mother's death. Though tanned to a healthy color by Albertan breezes, her skin was of that waxy texture which is the despair of artists, shading down perceptibly about the eyes. The mouth, small but well formed, with lips not too full to be expressive and yet full enough to indicate impulsiveness, were brilliant crimson. They were the most noticeable feature of the face except the eyes. In the dark hazel depths the luckless swain who was vouchsafed their full power was lost to all other feminine charm until Marie had released him.

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Few of her admirers could have told you the appearance of Marie's nose. They seldom catalogued her that far. It was the one feature that Marie herself regarded as treacherous. It was slightly aquiline and possibly a trifle too long. As a child she had spent long hours, while reading a book, with her hand pressed grimly against it in the endeavor to give it an upward tilt.

But no one else saw anything but exquisite beauty in Marie's nose. And of all those who admired it, with Marie's other attractions, the first and foremost was Dan Malloy. Dan was a cowboy and he was Irish. There was no disguising that. Not that he wanted to, but it was soon made apparent to him that neither of these attributes placed him high in the estimation of Jean La Farge. Good cowboys were a necessity, Jean admitted, and probably Irishmen had their place in the economy of the universe, but for Marie, Sacre damn, impossible.

In the States, Malloy was widely known as a rodeo rider. From the south his reputation had preceded him. Wainright Park knew of him long before it knew him, the winner at Pendleton, Cheyenne, Deadwood and Denver. Every Fall saw him in the competitions, the world series lure of every cowboy. And to him this world series money provided the sinews of his adventure and relief from the necessity of riding range. He had come in the spring without any definite

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intention of remaining and none of hiring out. But one sight of *la belle Marie* had made him give up all thought of any other adventure. He was still in Wainright Park in July and still without other occupation than that of gazing into Marie's eyes whenever the opportunity offered. When opportunity did not offer he made the opportunity. He had done so today.

Just how Dan knew that Marie was going to ride down by the creek that day is none of our business, but it was all of the business that Dan had and he attended to it with exactness and relish. It was with perfect confidence that he swept over the bluff and reined his pony down the bank to the trysting place. He gave a low chuckle of satisfaction as he observed two familiar horses on the bank of the creek. Marie was tightening her saddle girth, and Neenah, her half breed maid was assisting her. The cinches seemed to be giving them trouble.

"Just a moment, Marie," laughed Dan as he alighted, "let me help you."

"Ohu, Monsieur Dan, it is you, cried Marie, in pretended surprise. One might have inferred that Dan had just come up from Mexico from her manner. But she did not desist from the task she had undertaken and her pony looked around in surprise and indignation that two such eminent equestrians as his rider and this American cowboy champion should take so long to adjust his

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simple cinch. And to make the matter worse, Marie's hand most unaccountably came entangled in the loop and when Dan finally drew it up she gave a little squeal of pain. The pony stamped his feet and tossed his head. What unaccountable people were these two. Of course it had all to be done over again.

The injured—well, yes, why not say so, injured hand had to be petted and held. That seemed only right, and Dan performed the duty that lay before him manfully, though with a trifle of embarrassment. Twice he looked over at Neenah as he led Marie to a log in the shade of a second growth hickory tree. Now this Neenah was a wise maiden, experienced and capable. And this preliminary was quite in line with many other opening chapters that she had seen as auspiciously begun. Besides she had a lover herself, and though he was at the present time enjoying the hospitality of the North West Mounted, she knew and sympathized with all the symptoms that were so plainly evidenced.

"T'ree's maybe wat you call one crowd," Neenah observed coyly.

"Neenah," declared the smiling Malloy, "when you talk you always say something important. I like you."

Malloy was always laughing. It seemed to be difficult for him to look very serious, and Neenah was not quite on to his American lingo, but she

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finished her own thought by observing to her mistress that she would ride back alone to the ranch. She waved gayly as she topped the bank.

Without more ado, Dan pitched headlong into the matter nearest his heart. Fastening the horses, he drew Marie beside him on the log.

“See here,” he burst out. “Why don’t you marry me, Marie?”

“Father,” shyly began Marie, looking down at her boot toe, “he doesn’t like the name—Malloy.”

For answer Dan kissed her. Marie did not resist. Why should she? She seemed to like it. So did Dan. He did it again.

“If you really loved me, Marie, you would not let a silly reason like that stand in the way. Father or no father, I’m going—”

So absorbed were they with each other that they failed to hear a horseman ride up and dismount. But they heard him now.

CHAPTER II.

A LUCKLESS LOVE AFFAIR

Jean La Farge, in addition to keeping his ranch, was a deputy game warden, and jealously as he guarded the government herds of buffalo and elk, he guarded his daughter even more jealously. She was seldom out of his sight for very long.

Seeing Neenah crossing the prairie alone and being ever on the lookout for the omnipresent Malloy, La Farge was not long in discovering the tete-a-tete he more than suspected.

“By gar!” shouted the Frenchman wrathfully, as he leaped off his horse into the little gully. “How many times I tol’ you, my Marie, not for no-good cow puncher!”

Startled as the two lovers were by the irate game warden, the significance of his words was not lost on the Irish cowboy. Straightening himself up proudly but not belligerently, and still holding Marie’s hand, he declared:

“I’m a darn good cow puncher and I love Marie.”

“Maybe you tamn good cow puncher,” fired the father back at him, “But you not good enough for my Marie.”

So excited was La Farge that he fairly

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jumped up and down, waving his hands about like an excited wind mill.

Any other pony but his would have been frightened away by the demonstrative Frenchman's words and actions, but Chicko calmly continued eating grass—he was used to it.

Marie also was accustomed to this superabundant manner of expressing feeling, but she had taken the occasion to slip away and was now standing beside her horse. Her father's word was law in his own domain, and little Marie always remained meek until the storm had blown over.

It was at its height now. Even Malloy who was used to storms and weathered wordy ones fairly well himself, was nonplussed by the verbal barrage which swept the usually effective smile completely off his face. It was difficult for Malloy to look mad and he didn't now, only disappointed—disappointed mostly at his inability to make Marie's father listen to him. But Jean La Farge was unstoppable. The thought of an Irishman courting his daughter aroused his ire, more even than would a dozen poachers intent on despoiling the buffalo herds, and he was death on that.

But if Dan couldn't talk, at least he could see. A red coated superbly mounted policeman, attracted by the unusual disturbance in the valley, slide down the little gully and approached the still storming La Farge from the rear. Bill

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Harkness's job was to keep Wainright Park peaceful. It certainly was not peaceful in the little valley at that particular moment. One glance convinced him, however, that no blood was been spilled.

Tying his horse he leaped over the log beside the gesticulating La Farge and the pleading Marie.

"Here what's wrong with you two?"

"He want marry my Marie," La Farge fairly screamed at him. "Sacre tamin, ze gran children of Jean La Farge wit' dat Irish name—Malloy!" and with one last wave of his hand he rolled over the log and made, still grumbling, for Chicko.

Harkness was used to the fiery Frenchman and in his heart he sympathized with Malloy. Almost everyone in Wainright Park did sympathize with him. His attentions to Marie were so undivided, his affection so frankly expressed, and the parental opposition so stern and vociferous.

Dan had sat down on the log and was now mopping his face and shaking his head in perplexed silence. It was about the tenth time he had been over the same ground and they never got any farther.

"Tough old trooper, that," observed Harkness, still smiling as he watched La Farge mount and beckon to his daughter to follow him.

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Dan also looked up as he heard the horse mounting the embankment, but there was very little to encourage him from the stern aspect of Jean La Farge's back as it faded from view.

"Well, I don't say he's very tender, at least toward me," rejoined Dan solemnly.

Then a look of determination spread over his good natured face.

"But believe me," he said, as he brought his clinched right fist into the open palm of his left, "Marie's going to be Mrs. Dan Malloy whether Papa likes it or not!"

As Neenah approached the ranch house, she had a queer feeling that someone had been there during their absence. Neenah had an uncanny sixth sense which frequently warned her of danger or of an unseen presence. Many Indians and half-breeds have it. With all due caution, she opened the gate and slowly mounted the steps of the porch. Then she gave an involuntary start. Behind the third pillar there was a man.

"Sh-h-h, Neenah, Neenah," came from the shadow.

Neenah recognized the voice at once, although she had no idea that Fred Burgess had been released from jail. He had to serve a sixty-day sentence for poaching on the reservation. His sentence wouldn't have been up for ten days yet. Neenah had kept an accurate account.

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"Oh Fred, how I am glad to see you!" she cried as she threw herself into his arms.

For answer, Burgess clapped his hand over her mouth and looked anxiously around. He didn't want to be seen and least of all heard.

"Where's La Farge?" he hissed.

"La Farge, Marie, everybody all away."

Even then he seemed undecided. But Neenah's welcome was so enthusiastic, her joy at seeing him so evident, that the poacher relaxed his suspicion and returned, in a somewhat less exuberant fashion, Neenah's passionate salute.

"Come on in the house, nobody home."

And with another look around, Burgess followed the girl. Once inside, he inspected the living-room carefully, tried both doors and looked out of all the windows. Satisfied that Neenah had told him the truth, he walked over to the fireplace and examined La Farge's short-barreled shotgun. Neenah watched him anxiously.

"For why you want La Farge?" she asked suddenly.

Burgess jumped as though someone had drawn a gun on him. Then a sullen, revengeful look leapt into his eyes. Burgess's eyes were blue, very light blue, almost white they looked, in his tanned, deeply lined face. Their baleful gleam sent cold shivers down Neenah's spine.

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"La Farge sent me to prison," he said slowly, meaningly, "And I ain't overlookin' it."

With an effort Neenah set herself to dissuade Burgess.

"Why mak' trouble? We go 'way, get married. That's best t'ing," and again she threw her arms around the neck of the tall poacher.

So eloquent were the little half-breed's arms and eyes that she soon had Burgess responding to her own mood, when a sudden step sounded on the porch. La Farge had returned.

CHAPTER III

A COWARDLY SHOT

Burgess had prepared his retreat in case he was surprised, and he retired noiselessly out of the back door as La Farge and his daughter came in the front. As he went out the door, he heard La Farge explosively declare:

"If dat Malloy don' keep away from you, I keel 'im."

So determined and unrelenting was the watch which La Farge kept on his daughter, that for the next few days, Malloy had to content himself with seeing Marie at the village or with stolen and momentary meetings.

Patience finally reached the breaking point. Arrayed in all of the pride of his best cowboy grandeur, and leading another horse, he rode boldly up to the La Farge home. A cowboy less in love and less intent upon his errand than Malloy might have recognized a figure slinking into the bushes beside the gate. But Malloy noticed nothing. He was certain that La Farge was not at home and that Marie was. Tying his horse, he went boldly into the house. Marie was alone.

"Why have you come here?" she asked, startled.

"I couldn't help it, Marie, I had to. I have

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come to take you away with me. See, I have a horse for you. We'll go down to Fort Stanwicks and be married."

"But Father—" began Marie.

"Father will forgive us. I know he will, after he gets used to the idea."

"But no," said Marie. "It would break his heart."

"He'd get over it I know, but mine will be broken forever if you don't marry me."

Marie was still unconvinced, though this young Irishman had a very convincing way of stating his case. Even Marie's bird, which she had been feeding when he came in, tried to add his persuasiveness to the glib Irish tongue, and Marie was mightily torn between desire and duty. With a last burst of eloquence interspersed with kisses, Dan finally won.

"We must hurry," said Marie, "Father will be back any minute. I'll just get my hat and will write a note to him."

But before she could break away from his embrace, the door opened and Jean La Farge strode in. The game warden had been riding the range that afternoon with Bill Harkness and he had invited him to dinner, but seeing Malloy's horse tied in front of his gate, La Farge had left him hurriedly and galloped over to the ranch. Now he was in a white frenzy of anger.

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"So!" he cried, almost beside himself, "You have come to steal my girl."

"But we love each other."

"You lie, you Irisher, she don' love you. I forbid it!"

"Father, Father," cried Marie pleadingly, "I do, I love him."

"Go into your room, Marie," shouted La Farge as he pointed sternly toward her door.

As she hesitated, he stamped his foot.

"Go in zer. I will settle wis 'im once for all."

Dan with hands outstretched, took a step toward the door closing after his beloved Marie. When he turned around La Farge had removed his coat and was standing, glowering at him, with a huge bull whip in his hand. Once, twice, three times, he brought it whistling and cracking about Dan's unresisting shoulders.

Suddenly a shot rang out. Jean La Farge pitched forward at Dan's feet.

Stunned as he was at this sudden development, Dan rushed to the window from which smoke was still pouring into the room. Down the walk he saw a fast flying figure. Drawing his own revolver, he fired at the dodging target. Then he leapt back to see what assistance he could render La Farge.

As he bent over the old man, his revolver still in his hand, Marie rushed out of her room. One look at the huddled figure on the floor with her

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lover bending over him, and her whole world came crashing down upon her. Neenah dashing in from the porch, was just in time to catch her mistress as she fainted away. Dan made a gesture as though to take her in his arms, but Neenah held her tightly, an inscrutable look in her beady black eyes.

"You take care of her, Neenah. I'll be back as soon as I've caught the scoundrel," and Dan dashed out of the door, made a flying leap on to his horse, and was off like the wind, in the direction the murderer had taken.

As Marie regained her senses the full realization of the situation was borne in upon her.

"Did you see it, Neenah?"

"No, mamzelle, I on porch. No one here 'cept Dan Malloy."

Into this scene of death and sorrow strode Bill Harkness. From the sobbing and hysterical Marie he could learn nothing. His friend, Jean La Farge, had breathed his last. Instinctively, and putting out of his mind all personal sorrow for the passing of his friend, Harkness set to work. He was all officer now.

"Take Miss La Farge into her room, Neenah, and come back here immediately."

While she was gone he studied the situation. He examined the wound, noted the whip in the old man's hand and the position of the body.

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When Neenah returned, he pointed his finger at her threateningly:

“What do you know about this, Neenah?”

“All me know, sir,” replied the girl hesitatingly, “is Malloy come for mamzelle Marie. La Farge mak’ beeg fuss. Me standing on porch, hear much big words. Malloy he go ‘way—beeg hurry.”

“All right,” said Harkness. “Call up the post. Tell them what you’ve told me, and tell them to send the coroner right over. I’m off after Malloy.”

CHAPTER IV

THE RESCUE

Fred Burgess, his vengeance satisfied, thought only of escape. He had a good start owing to Malloy's effort to assist the dying La Farge. Naturally he rode toward the country he knew best, the heart of the buffalo reservation, but in his haste he left tracks which the pursuing Malloy readily followed. And Malloy, too, had the better horse.

Their combined track was easy for the trooper to follow.

Dodging in and out of gullies across narrow, swift flowing streams, and doubling back on his track once, Burgess halted near a shack in the hope that he had thrown pursuit off his trail. To his amazement and consternation, he heard approaching hoof beats. As he glanced over his shoulder he recognized the peculiar color of Malloy's pony.

It was a Palamino. The only others he had ever seen were on a ranch where he had previously worked, three hundred miles from here, down Calgary way. He knew they were fast as the wind and tireless.

He mounted a ridge commanding a wide stretch of territory and he noted with satisfac-

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tion that Malloy had stopped at the place where he had doubled back on his tracks.

Now another horseman claimed his attention. He wore the red coat of the Royal Mounted. As the trooper drew up to Malloy, Burgess recognized him. It was Harkness. The man who had seen him commit the crime and the official administrator of law and order in the territory were together. If in some way he could accomplish their destruction, he would insure his own safety. His eyes roamed the wide upland, grazing land of the buffalo reservation. Suddenly a diabolical plan formed itself in his scheming brain.

Far below him at the bend of the little river, Harkness dismounted and approached Malloy. Dan had dismounted and was carefully examining the ground, his revolver still in his hand. Not knowing the temper of the other, and appreciating to the full the Yankee initiative of which he had had experience, Harkness unlimbered his own artillery. Holding it in readiness, he approached Malloy. Five paces away he stopped.

“You’re wanted, Malloy,” he said incisively, “for shooting Jean La Farge.”

“Me!” exclaimed Dan, beside himself with astonishment, “Me, kill La Farge? Why you’re crazy!”

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"Let's see your gun then," said the officer.

Dan meekly handed it over. One chamber had been fired. Harkness ran his finger over the barrel and made a gesture of inquiry toward his prisoner.

"Darn it all," said Malloy helplessly, "I fired that at the fellow who did the shooting, and what's more I was catching up to him when you stopped me. As I was following his trail he doubled back right here."

"Not so good, Malloy, you'll have to come with me. I'll keep this gun as evidence."

Both men mounted and Harkness started his prisoner back to the post.

Malloy being in the lead saw it first. They had been too much engrossed with their own affairs to think of anything else before. A cloud of dust preceded it down the buffalo trail. Burgess had taken this course on purpose to disguise, as much as possible, his pony's tracks. All Malloy's trained senses now told him that they were in the path of a stampede. As he looked closer he saw that the stampede was one of buffaloes, not cattle. Turning to his captor he shouted:

"We'll have to run for it or we'll be trampled to death. We're right in their path."

In vain Harkness looked around for some method of escape as the buffalo were almost upon

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them, urged on in their maddened flight by every effort at Burgess's command. Harkness saw his danger.

"Each for himself," he shouted as he whirled his already frightened and snorting mount.

Together they dashed down the valley. Neither, however, reckoned with the size and terror of the largest herd of buffalo in the world. As they swung around the next bend of the valley, they saw to their consternation, that their escape was cut off. Another part of the herd was charging madly across their only line of retreat. The only possible salvation was to beat this encircling charge to the narrow neck of land rising above the bend in the river, two hundred yards away.

To Malloy's Palamino this was not impossible. Harkness' horse, even in his terror, was not so speedy. Realizing this and anxious to give the officer a better chance at their only line of retreat, Dan waved his left arm toward the river bank and then whirled his pony directly at the head of the column of charging buffalo. With cattle it would have been possible to turn the column, and if he had had his gun he might still have been able to run the leaders of the column out of their course, but in spite of their utmost efforts, Dan and his pony made little headway and only endangered themselves.

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Hoping he had given Harkness time to make the opening, Dan gave up his forlorn hope, and made a dash for it himself. But Harkness had not quite made it before the first of the buffalo reached the narrow opening scarcely twenty feet across. And even as Malloy looked, the trooper's horse went down in a tangle of hoofs on top of his rider.

Without a thought of his own safety, Malloy dodging in and out of the front ranks of the charging buffaloes, reached the trooper's side.

"Reach up your hand, Harkness, as I go by!" he shouted at the top of his voice.

The din of thundering hoofs flung the shout back into his teeth. There was no answer from Harkness. Pushing, plunging, rearing, kicking, and biting, the Palamino fought the on-rushing buffalo, as only a well-trained cow pony can fight. When Malloy leapt from his back to aid the stricken Harkness, the Palamino covered as best he could the two figures on the ground, his rider and the senseless trooper.

Watching carefully for the first break in the line, Malloy half dragged, half carried, Harkness the few feet to the river bank and plunged over into the water, the Palamino following suit. The water was not deep and on the other side they were safe from the charge. Placing the

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still unconscious Harkness across his saddle bow, Malloy brought the wounded officer back to the La Farge ranch house.

Dragging him up the porch and in the door, he placed him carefully on the couch. Neenah looked at him fascinated. Marie, unable to speak through her sobs, knelt beside her father's head, eyes wide with grief and accusation.

Dan came toward her with out-stretched hands. To his amazement she shrank from him. Bursting into tears she threw herself upon her father's body as though to protect him. Dan tried to lift the sobbing form. When she finally did raise her face, horror and detestation were indelibly written upon it.

"Why Marie," said Dan in horrified tones, "you ain't believin' it was me?" he asked. "Why I'd let him tear me to pieces and never lift a finger just because he was—your Dad."

But the circumstantial evidence was too strong against him. Marie looked at Neenah. So did Dan. The Indian maiden was nervously puckering up her apron but her eyes looked accusingly at Malloy. Taking courage from her maid, Marie straightened to her full height and pointed to the door.

"Go, go," she said unsteadily, "before the officers come. I never want to see you again."

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Unbelieving, shaken to his very soul, Dan backed toward the door. One last look he gave, but Marie did not weaken. Then he turned swiftly and went out.

CHAPTER V

THE BOOB

The Bar O ranch was making its final preparations for the Calgary Stampede. Its owner, Andrew Regan, was particularly anxious for his cowboys to make a showing this year. At the last stampede he had lost the majority of contests to his greatest rival, in breeding stock, racing horses, and training riders—Al Morton. This year he would get square with him, and then, too, he was particularly anxious on account of the honor that would come to the Bar O in the greatest stampede that was ever held.

For this year marked the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of Fort Calgary and the coming of the Northwest Mounted Police to Alberta. Seventy-five thousand people were expected to be in attendance, the greatest crowd ever assembled in the Northwest. Earl Haig, too, had promised to make an official visit with his lady to the stampede. There would be a double honor in receiving the prizes from his hand.

Twenty of Regan's men had entered in various events. Broncho busting, bareback riding, Roman riding, and races of all kinds. The best of his stock had been in training for weeks under

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the watchful eye of himself and his foreman, Blackie Smith.

The event, however, in which Regan was most interested, was the Roman race and he was most interested in this because Morton had won it from him last year. But Regan had sprung a surprise this year by importing a team from the South whose speed gave him every reason to believe that he would win the prize back again.

Ed Corbett, the star rider of the Bar O, had never seen such speed in his life and had already bet every cent of his salary for the coming year on the outcome of this race. In fact, almost the entire personnel of the two thousand acre ranch had wagered on Andrew Regan's pair of Palaminoes, and these same clay bank speed demons were expected to clean out the pockets of Morton's sportive cowpunchers. For most of the Bar O wagers had been made with them.

Just now Regan and his daughter Alberta were watching the men taking turns in riding an outlaw. Four of the men had been ignominiously pitched off his back. Regan was getting impatient.

"Can't some of you fellows ride the devil? How about you, Corbett?"

Though Corbett was the star rider of the Bar O, he did not seem to face this particular outlaw with any relish or enjoyment. Still he

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could not afford to show the white feather. As he looked around, he caught the eye of the ranch's potato peeler, Chuck Jones.

Chuck was apparently eminently qualified for this arduous and endless task. It was said of him that he had been the champion potato peeler of an overseas outfit. His good-natured and vacant-looking face, his boobishly cut hair, and loose-jointed lackadaisical manner, argued no higher ambition than potato peeling. It was agreed that Chuck and potato peeling were invented for each other.

Every man on the ranch had taken a kick at poor Chuck, but languid as his ordinary movements were, none of the kicks had ever landed. Chuck was a few inches outside of every one. It was a perfectly safe venture to aim a kick at Chuck. He never kicked back and he answered every kick with his inevitable smile and drawling, "How come." So Chuck had been accepted on his own terms and for a year now had peeled all the potatoes that forty-five hungry cowboys could eat.

Chuck's one passion, when he could sneak time away from his potato peeling, was the training corral, but this passion had to be exercised with infinite finesse and adroitness. He loved to watch the horses and the riders. Why shouldn't he? For Chuck Jones was none other than Dan

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Malloy, Champion Rodeo Rider and Cow-puncher of Cheyenne. Nevertheless he could not afford to let anyone know that he cared one potato peel about horses, for he was still a fugitive from justice, and justice was sure to look for him on a horse or around horses.

Dan or Chuck Jones, as we must call him now, had wandered three-hundred miles from Wainright Park, ever hoping that something would turn up which would prove his innocence, or prove some other guilty of the murder of Jean La Farge.

The arm of the law was long, and Chuck had exhausted several disguises and innumerable jobs because of the inquisitiveness of Bill Harkness. Now he was out of Harkness' territory, but nevertheless he relaxed not one jot or tittle from the characterization of Chuck Jones. He had carefully cultivated a blandness of expression and a blankness of look which were helped out by the most boobish clothes he could get and a hat which turned down close about his face. As one of the hands said, Chuck looked like one of his own potatoes half-covered by a peeling dish.

Everytime, however, that Chuck passed the corral with his wheelbarrow of potatoes, he found it convenient to set it down and peek through the bars at the forbidden activity within.

It was at one of these times that Corbett found

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his eyes resting upon the face of the ranch clown and potato peeler. He had looked into this face many times before but he had never seen it like this. There was expression in it and the expression was a challenging one.

Hurling caution to the winds, Corbett mounted the outlaw. But the men had no sooner let go the blindfold then Corbett was sent skyrocketing over the broncho's head and landed in a heap, mostly on his right ear and left ankle, amid the laughter of the entire company. Corbett tried to rise to his feet but sat down again anxiously rubbing his left ankle.

"Corbett ain't a rider," said a drawling voice, "he's a ground hog."

Alberta Regan looked to see whence the voice proceeded. She had seen the potato peeler often and laughed at him as others had, but she never credited him with a sense of humor. If she thought about him at all, she probably felt that a man who looked as funny as Chuck Jones did not need a sense of humor, but neither Alberta nor anyone else around Calgary had ever surprised any other look than one of stupidity on Chuck's face. Alberta was amazed. But still more astonishing to her was the rapidity and completeness with which the look of intelligent amusement evaporated from Chuck's face and left there its accustomed stolidity.

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Chuck's momentary lapse from character thoroughly frightened him.

"Father did you hear that?" asked Alberta, pointing at Chuck.

"Yes, I heard it, dear, but of course Corbett ain't so much a broncho buster as he is a Roman rider. Run over and see if he's much hurt, Blackie."

Under cover of this diversion, Chuck returned to his back door station wheeling his barrel of potatoes with the straggling, shuffling, gait which he had effected for a year.

"Gee, that was a narrow escape," he said to himself. "Guess I'd better stick by the potatoe cart."

As the peelings started to fall into the pail between his legs, Chuck became aware of a gentle tapping just behind him.

"It might be that kid Alberta."

But no. It sounded like a heavier foot than hers, and why should she come bothering around him anyway? Chuck went on peeling. The tapping continued. Then it grew closer. Finally it was right beside Chuck's own foot. He glanced at it. It spoke volumes for Chuck's nerves that no start of surprise passed through his body. Chuck had nerves of steel. The boot looked very military. It was fitted with a silver chain spur, and as Chuck glanced at it through the corner of

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his eye, he noted a riding crop flicking regularly and rhythmically against the polished leather. Chuck's eyes followed the column of leather until at the top it met the unmistakable smart trousering of a trooper of the Northwest Mounted Police.

CHAPTER VI

ENTER OFFICER CALLAHAN

The rumor that the Bar O had a new hand had eventually leaked into the Post at Calgary. The result was a visit from Callahan of the Mounted. Callahan was a natty officer. He had red hair and a tiny red mustache, as shiny and well greased as were the boots in which Chuck's face was now reflected. Why he did it Malloy never knew. It must have been the Irish in him. But as though by accident a newly peeled potatoe slipped out of his hand and fell directly on that shiny-boot. The lumbering and clumsy effort to retrieve the potatoe only made matters worse—for the boot. But Callahan only chuckled. He was Irish too.

“Nice day,” he observed by way of introduction, as he wiped the soiled boot with his gauntlet glove.

“Ayeh,” drawled Chuck without look up. It was not the voice of Bill Harkness.

“Stranger 'round here?” asked the policeman, rocking back on his heels.

Chuck rose slowly and wiped his hands carefully before he spoke. His hat was pulled well down on his head in the manner he affected. His dull looking blue eyes held no spark of intelli-

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gence in them as they looked out at the officer from under the pulled down brim.

“I’ve peeled enough spuds to be called a native son.”

Smilingly looking him over, Callahan made another thrust.

“Do much riding?” he hazarded, still rocking on his heels.

The same drawling voice replied with no more intelligence than before.

“Nope. If I gotta have blisters, I want ‘em on my feet.”

As he said it, Chuck looked down at his feet, the great toes of which could be seen pinkly peering out of his well-worn shoes.

Callahan really laughed at this sally. Then he grew serious. With a sudden motion, he brought his hand down sharply on Chuck’s shoulder. As that individual jumped guiltily, Callahan laughed again.

“You’ll do. What’s your name?”

“Jones — Chuck Jones, champion potatoe peeler of Alberta.”

“All right Jones. Heard about you. Just came up to get acquainted. See you again.” And the red-haired one took himself off to re-join Miss Alberta, who had been a witness to the interview.

Chuck resumed his potatoe peeling, but the smile did not return to his face until he saw the

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representative of the law canter out of the ranch gate.

As Callahan went out another party of horsemen entered. At its head was Al Morton, owner of a ranch as famous as the Bar O and as full of desire to win the money at the approaching Stampede. Morton and his party were made welcome at the corral fence, where the men of the Bar O were watching the tryouts. Morton handed Regan a pamphlet printed in red and black with a cut of a man on horseback on the cover. It announced the Calgary Exhibition, Jubilee and Stampede, July sixth to eleventh.

"Here it is, Andy, the books right off the press. That ought to draw a bigger crowd to Calgary than ever saw the stampede before. I guess, though I'm afraid that you won't have much chance at the prizes this year, from all I hear."

"What do you mean?" asked Regan, bristling. Morton was a man who dearly liked to tease. He had teased the sober-minded and earnest Regan within an inch of his life for the last ten years. Ever since he had discovered how easy it was.

"My boys got everything nailed down this year so far as I can see. We done you up pretty well last year, but that ain't a circumstance to what we will do to you this year. Thanks."

Regan always carried a bunch of stogies in

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his outside breast pocket. He usually hid them when Morton was around. It always seemed to Morton that they were there for his special benefit. He never failed to help himself. "Well, maybe you did get more than you was entitled to last year, includin' the Roman race. But its all different this year. This time she's my meat. Got a new pair and they're beauts, I'm tellin' you."

"Rave on, Andy, rave on. But I've got a pair of hosses that travel faster'n gossip. And more than that, I've got ten thousand dollars that says that they can beat your pair in a walk."

"Done," said Regan eagerly. "My hand on it. The ten thousand is as good as mine."

The two men shook hands. Morton was the merrier of the two. It was the second ten thousand that had been wagered on that Roman race.

"You don't mind if I smoke another of these burning shames, do you?" asked Morton as he helped himself to another of Regan's stogies. They burn just like your m'oney."

And he walked off still laughing. Regan looked annoyed. Why was Morton so anxious to bet these large sums with him on that Roman race? Did he have something up his sleeve? He just better look at that team of his again.

Calling Corbett, he asked him if his ankle hurt him too much to give the Palaminos a tryout. Corbett was willing and for the next half hour

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Regan watched carefully every move of the beautiful animals as they sped up and down the track.

Every time the Roman teams came out, Chuck Jones found some occasion to witness the training. Usually it was a chore that was no part of his work as a potatoe peeler. Today he walked slowly about the end of the track where Regan stood, busily toting a forkful of hay, and with seeming carelessness letting it fall again to the ground. All would have gone well today, as it had done so often before, if Chuck had not dropped the hay in front of Blackie Smith. So intent was he on the track and the Roman team that he jabbed the fork down into the hay again without seeing what he was doing. Unfortunately for Chuck the fork landed on the most favored of all of Blackie's pet corns. With a howl of pain the foreman made a pass at Chuck, which missed as usual.

"My God, you lout. Get back to your potatoes. Whatin'ell you doin' here anyway?" But he did not press the matter further, as Corbett was just dismounting.

"Great work, Corbett! A little more trainin' an' we'll win the shirt right off'n Morton's back."

As Regan stepped back he almost trod on Chuck. He looked at him good naturedly. Not so Blackie.

"I thought I told you to git back to your job," and he shied another ineffectual kick Chuckward.

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But Regan was more kindly. And besides he was feeling pretty much elated after the tryout.

"Don't do that, Blackie. Did you have something on your mind, sonny?"

Pointing at the team the men were leading away, Chuck said earnestly.

"They'd go a lot faster, if Corbett didn't lay back so hard on the reins."

A chorus of laughter in which even Regan joined, greeted this observation from the potatoe peeler. Blackie was about to lay violent hands on Chuck, when he shook himself free and almost shouted:

"I know something about horses, I do. And to prove it I'll just ride that tough one that almost made an angel out of Corbett."

Tenderfoot baiting is the most enjoyable pastime of the cowboy and it was no time at all before the potatoe peeler was in the saddle on top of the prize outlaw of the Bar O ranch. Many a man before Dan Malloy has let Pride and Anger get the better of Prudence. Dan thought Officer Callahan had gone for the day. He hadn't. As the outlaw plunged toward the fence Dan saw to his disgust and astonishment the waxed mustache, the red hair and questioning eyes of that same Callahan.

CHAPTER VII

THE NIGHT WIND

It is quite possible that Dan Malloy could have weathered this equine whirlwind. He had tamed worse in the States and he was enjoying himself hugely—until he espied Callahan. But there is one thing that no man can do. This is to ride a bucking broncho and be thinking about something else. This form of exercise requires undivided attention, and even at that it is very likely to prove disastrous.

So it is no wonder that the next second found Dan Malloy, or rather, Chuck Jones trying to dig a ditch in the turf of the corral. His violent impact with the ground shook Chuck back into character with resounding suddenness and his first gesture was the characteristic one of pulling down his small brimmed hat over his eyes. His next was more natural and less artful. It also served to relieve his injured feelings. He expelled his breath a couple of times through half closed lips, so that the effect on his cheeks was that of a pair of thoroughly inflated balloons. The sight was so grotesque that Regan, Alberta, Blackie and the others who were watching this tenderfoot trying to ride Sweet Marie the outlaw burst into gales of laughter. Chuck could not be much hurt after all, though he had taken

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as spectacular a fall as it was possible to take. It might be that potatoe peeling would now have to be undertaken in a standing position for a few days at least.

The lynx-eyed Callahan, who thought he saw some justification for the suspicion that had taken possession of him when he first espied Chuck, was as amused as the others, but with this amusement there was also a tinge of disgust that he could have suspected that this boobish potatoe peeler could have anything to do with the mysteriously disappeared Dan Malloy. However, he had followed to the letter the precept of the service, never give up your man. Callahan never did. He was one of the most relentless and adroit trackers of the Mounted. In spite of his dandified appearance, he was a hard man to elude. But even Callahan now admitted to himself that he had been following a cold scent.

“Well, Regan,” he said to the ranchman as he joined the little group that was still laughing at the ridiculous plight of the flattened K. P., “You can’t make a morning glory out of a spud, can you? The Almighty did not give them clinging vines.”

“Yer damned right,” laughed Regan, “but I hope he ain’t damaged. He’s a good potatoe peeler. He better stick to the potatoe barrow in the future. Much safer in the long run.”

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Pretty, gentle eyed Alberta, almost submerged in the shadow of her huge sombrero, looked long and sympathetically as the ungentle cowboys helped Chuck to his feet. There was something very engaging in the peeler of potatoes, and she had frequently surprised a queer and unintended smile on his face when, imagining he was unobserved, he thought his thoughts as he bent over his humble task at the door of the lean-to. As she took Callahan's arm to go up to the house, she looked over her shoulder and waved her hand rather surreptitiously in Chuck's direction. He did not wave back, but his soul warmed at this feminine manifestation of concern for him.

Malloy had had a rather narrow escape, he told himself as he took up his knife and attacked the bottomless spud basket. If he had not seen that cold inquiring pair of blue eyes, he might have stuck on Sweet Marie and proved to the ranch that he actually did know something about horses. In view of his disguise and the suspicion of the officer, that would not have been so good. Dan admitted the fact unhesitatingly. It was the first fall he had ever taken from the back of a horse that filled him with complete satisfaction. This certainly was one of his most lucky days. While his luck held he would try it to the utmost. He was in a reckless mood as he planned his next adventure. For this business of being a boob had to be compensated for some

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way And there was only one way that gave Malloy any kick.

Even under the watchful eyes, it was easy enough, with his ready wit and steel nerves, and with a fair break in the luck, for Malloy to play Chuck Jones. But when night came, the yearning to be with the splendid creatures he loved so well was more than Dan could resist. Time and again he had exercised this yearning while the rest of the ranch was wrapped in slumber. Since he was at the very bottom of the social ladder he was not even permitted to sleep in the bunk house. He had a shakedown in the lean-to just off the kitchen. In fact he could have taken two steps from the doorway where he conducted the surgical operations on the tubers and been in bed. But this arrangement suited Dan to a T. He was free to come and go as he pleased. No one kept any check on his movements. Even such small belongings as he treasured were safe from prying eyes under his bunk and on the wall over the bed in an old clothes boiler.

If Callahan had taken the trouble to search this modest couch or have a look at the Jones wardrobe in a humble receptacle on the wall he would have been the most surprised man in all of Canada. But Callahan's suspicions had been lulled to sleep. Besides he was having a very agreeable time in the ranch parlor listening to Alberta sing and play. His mind was thoroughly

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occupied with thoughts of how attractive Regan's daughter was growing up to be and how archly she looked at him out of her black eyes, framed in a mist of the yellowest of hair. And he had forgotten Chuck Jones and Chuck had forgotten him.

From the mysterious recesses of the boiler, Dan drew out a bag. It was an old bag and one of the handles was broken. When he had arrived he had to carry it under his arm. Its dilapidated look went splendidly with his appearance and the story Chuck Jones told. Dan smiled as he opened it. And with that smile all of Chuck Jones deserted the face and the figure of the masquerader. He was Dan Malloy again, champion rodeo rider and cowboy. But to return to his proper person and really enjoy it, he needed to dress the part. The old weatherbeaten bag held the costume and make up.

Snatching it open, Dan hastily drew out, with almost reverent fingers, a pair of immaculate cream colored riding breeches, a chamois shirt with elaborate beaded work on the pocket and about the neck, a pair of black, hand tooled boots with white deer skin inserts forming a flower pattern where the "v" was cut at the front and back, and an eight gallon Stetson hat. The boots had set him back fifty bucks, and this was a fact that never failed to occur to him as he pulled them on. It was a rig-out that would have glad-

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dened the heart of any cowboy. Nevertheless, Dan's usually smiling face took on a serious expression there in the dark.

He had planned to be married in that outfit.

As Dan came o'er of his dormitory and started around the house to the barn, he heard the strains of "Irish Eyes" floating out the open door. He paused for a moment as the melodious young voice thrilled the beautiful melody. He had never heard it before. It made him think of a pair of French eyes that had looked so accusingly yet so sadly at him as he had tried in vain to argue his innocence. He stood there bare-headed in the deep shadows of a beautiful moonlight night, and pondered on the injustice of the world in general and those beautiful eyes in particular. Suddenly the song stopped. Awaking from his lethargy, Dan tiptoed down to the barn.

Picking up a saddle and bridle, he unfastened the lasso and noiselessly unbarred the gate to the high corral. Here he was in his native element again. Selecting his favorite horse, he threw the rope with a minimum of commotion, he was soon saddled up and riding down the lane.

Now he was the real Dan Malloy again. So far as he was concerned such a thing as an Irish potato just did not exist. Miles and miles he covered, sometimes at a trot, sometimes at break-neck speed. He was a will-o-the-wisp. He went

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wherever fancy moved him, but he went as a Malloy should go. On top of a gentle rise he reined in his horse and folded his arms surveying impersonally the beautiful panorama of the moonlit hills and the dark shadowed valleys.

Suddenly he saw his horse prick up his ears. Languidly he looked in the direction indicated by the sensitive aerials. Another horseman was abroad. And there was the flat-brimmed, high-peaked hat of the Royal Mounted. Dan was all alive now to his danger. Romance oozed out of his being and caution and cunning took its place. As the horseman came on Dan recognized the mount. It was the horse that Callahan of the Mounted had ridden that afternoon as he came in to the Bar Q Ranch. Alberta must have been singing "Irish Eyes" to him though Dan, and his opinion of Alberta took a distinct drop.

Wheeling swiftly Dan dashed down the hill in the opposite direction from the ranch.

CHAPTER VIII

SUSPICION

For Callahan, "Irish Eyes" had been a night cap. It was the last encore. He had taken his departure with Alberta's bubbly little voice still ringing in his ears. But his eyes were still on the job. They almost always were. Those eyes had seen the white clad figure of a horseman just rounding the bend at the foot of the little lane that led away from the Bar O ranch, or led to it, depending on which direction a rider was going.

There was nothing so very suspicious about this, except that everything was suspicious to a policeman. It would do no harm to find out who was this lone horseman who cantered so freely across the lower meadow where no road or even pathway led. If he had followed a road, Callahan would not have thought it so important to follow him. It was a full hour before Callahan came up to his quarry, and the aimless character of the trail he followed still more puzzled the dauntless tracker of men. But the excitement did not start until that moment when Dan caught sight of the officer's horse. From then on it was a race in earnest.

From previous nocturnal excursions, Dan was familiar with every foot of the country surrounding the Bar O. Callahan was too, in a way. But

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he soon became aware that the lone rider was fetching a circle to come back to the ranch and he was able to elude many a well planned trap by taking a shorter inner route.

Dan's final manoeuver was to ride directly away from the ranch until he was well hidden by an intervening hill. Then he doubled back on his tracks and made a bee line into the ranch corral. Here he threw off the saddle and bridle with lightening speed and put them in the place where he had found them. Carefully shutting the gate, and keeping always in the shadows, he dodged through the trees and into the house. It was the work of a moment to replace the clothes he had worn into the old bag and to hurl that dilapidated thing back into the boiler. He was none too soon. As he sprung into his humble bed and jammed the covers up under his chin, he thought to ruffle up his hair as though he had been sleeping on it.

And even so he was but one step ahead of the law. He heard that step as it creaked on the door sill. Dan's bed was so placed that the tell-tale moon cast one of its most searching beams directly on his face. This saved the officer the trouble of lighting a lantern. As noiselessly as a cat, Callahan opened the door and peered into the room. He took its every feature in as he searched for some sign that the sleeping Adonis he was disturbing had not been sleeping long.

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But everything was as one would suppose it would be in the humble bed room of a peeler of spuds. A battered boiler, dangling from a nail was quite in keeping with the artistic horizon of a man of Chuck's profession. There was nothing else there.

Callahan came closer to the sleeper. Chuck stirred as a shadow passed across his face. Callahan repeated the movement, passing his hand between the window and the face of the man on the couch. This time Chuck produced a realistic snore. Callahan smiled. Then he frowned. An end to this. With a swift movement, he grasped the covers and yanked them down. His frown changed again to a sarcastic smile. Dan yawned, opened one eye, sleepily. Shut it again, made an ineffectual movement with his hands, yawned again and looked up into Callahan's face with half closed eyes. Then he, too, smiled.

"Hey, you," snapped Callahan, "do you always sleep in your trousers?"

Dan shook his head and as he shook it he managed another tremendous yawn.

"Nope," he replied in a sleepy voice, "only when I'm extra tired."

With a look of utter disgust on his face, Callahan threw the covers back over Chuck and marched out of the lean-to. This man might be a perfect idiot as he looked, but he always had a comeback, and the comeback was a trifle too

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clever to come from such a pysiognomy. Callahan kicked his spurs against the step of the porch in indecision, something very unusual with him. Once he turned partly toward the door again, and the pseudo sleeper, who was atingle with every sense throbbing, could imagine every move, though he could see nothing. Finally he stepped off the porch. For the first time, Dan smiled a real, not a property smile. He had won again. His lucky day had closed as it had begun.

But Callahan was not through yet. Picking his way to the barn, he examined all the saddles he could see. Finally he felt of the one that Dan had used. It was still moist and smelled of recent use, too recent to have hung up for hours like the other saddles. He tested it against the others.

Then he went into the corral. The first horse he touched whinnied and rubbed his nozzle against his arm. Callahan felt along the neck. It was moist. Then he ran his hand down to the withers. They too were wet. Putting his hand to his nose, he exclaimed "Perspiration! This is the horse all right but who was the rider!"

And he looked long and thoughtfully at the end of the ranch house where Chuck Jones slept.

His mind was made up.

The next day, bright and early, Callahan presented himself at the Post in Calgary. He did not tell the Sergeant his suspicions exactly, but

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he searched with care the file of fugitives from justice. Finally he found the paper he was looking for. When he had read it over twice, he told the other officers of his adventure at the Bar O Ranch and of the boobish looking peeler of spuds. He described his appearance and his bland boyish countenance.

“That’s Malloy’s description all right. But there are only two people who can identify Malloy, and Harkness is up Peace River.”

“Then,” said Callahan rising, “that leaves Marie La Farge as the only identifying witness.”

“Yep,” was the reply, “and Wainright Park is only three hundred miles from here.”

CHAPTER IX

As the days sped by the Bar O Ranch and all of its busy riders and workers forgot about Officer Callahan. If little Alberta wondered where the nattily dressed officer was keeping himself she maintained a maidenly and discreet reserve. Alberta was young and there were many others who took his place about the piano, on the rides which she made over the rolling plateaus of the Bar O ranges and on the rails of the corral. Most of the Bar O's interest was centered in the preparation for the coming Stampede and Alberta was not the only one who wore holes in the soles of her shoes in the excitement of watching the exercise of the ponies, the training of the Roman race pairs, the broncho busting stage coach racers and other competitive events which were listed in the biggest program that the Calgary Stampede had ever offered.

Dan Malloy was another who had forgotten Officer Callahan. Supremely confident of his luck and elated at the little stratagems which had apparently thwarted the officer, he went about his humble tasks with an ever watchful eye, but more confidence than his heart had dared to hope for a year past. Dan had even thought of another expedient for creating the impression of boobishness wherein lay his safety from recognition. He had bought himself a guitar.

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Having only an elemental knowledge of music and a voice which only a mother could excuse, his perseverance in the musical art increased the exclusiveness with which the other cowboys treated him almost to the vanishing point. The few who attempted to become intimate with the clownish personality with which Malloy had masked himself were thoroughly repelled by the discordant efforts of the ingenious young man to extract love strains from the obdurate guitar. The result was that if conversation started about the potato pail and it threatened to become in any way personal, a transfer to the guitar terminated it with alacrity and usually for all time. It there was anyone in all of Canada who was absolutely alone in fact and in thought, that person was Dan Malloy.

But now the great event of Calgary's year was rapidly approaching. Only a few days remained for the final preparations. People were pouring into the city in automobiles, caravans, teams, oxcarts, and on foot. Beside that, excursions from every part of Canada brought thousands of people and every trainfull still further crowded the bustling little city to the bursting point. Calgary was expecting the biggest day in its history and every indication pointed to the realization of its hope.

The City Fathers had asked every householder to open up every spare room and every possible

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corner where a bed could be set up to these incoming excursions. Many automobiles had taken possession of available camp sites along the road outside of the city. The avenues of approach to the city looked as though Coxey's Army had encamped about it.

Among the throng moved special details of Canada's crack police force, the North West Mounted. Officers from far and near were there, some of them coming from as far as British Columbia. And their presence was required. Such a concourse of people on holiday bent naturally drew undesirables. Notices were posted in various places offering rewards for the capture of pick-pockets, sneak thieves, hold-up men and confidence workers. And each officer in addition had a list in his pocket of those wanted in the various posts from which they came. If these officers were there primarily for the protection of the people against crime, that very fact gave them the greater opportunity to pounce upon some criminal who felt that in operating away from home he had the greater opportunity to escape observation.

The Bar O Ranch lay far enough away from the city to render it immune from the invasion of many guests either desirable or otherwise. Nevertheless from day to day officers of the North West Mounted visited the ranch on one errand or another. Quite naturally these ex-

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cited a certain interest in the life of Malloy and from the corner of his kitchen he kept a constant watch on the lane gate which opened on Regan's hospitable ranch house. With strangers about, Dan found the guitar even more effective than it had been with the cowboys and help around the ranch. It was an unfailing protection. Even Alberta who had been inclined to sympathize with the loneliness and ostracism of the lowly menial, was driven to desert him when he felt a musical spasm coming on.

Dan's inclination was to join the growing fringe of people about the corral, but this same growing fringe had made the necessity for more potatoes all the time a constant menace to his interest in this direction. It kept him tied very closely to the potato pail. Possibly this unusual preoccupation caused him to neglect the gate for a short time. At any event, he did not see a dusty buck board, drawn by a pair of up country horses, which had evidently been driven a long way, trot in at the front gate. It contained three persons—two women and an officer of the Mounted. The dusty equipage drove around the ranch house without stopping at the front door. As it came back into the range of Malloy's vision again, he started as though he had been roused from a reverie. How on earth did that team get in there without him seeing it? And there seemed to be a very familiar slant to that officer's

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head, too. Where and when had he seen that back before?

The team continued on down to the corral, the officer alighted and tied the horses. Dan got up to watch him better. Shufflingly he made his way over behind the wood pile, where he could see better. From this new vantage point he had a better opportunity. Like a flash he recognized his inquisitive enemy, Callahan. Instinctively, Dan's hand went up to his head and the boobish looking down-turned hat was pulled still further over his eyes.

"Phew!" exclaimed Dan, under his breath, "I'm in for it again. Wonder who the dames are."

But Callahan had deferentially saluted his charges and walked over to the corral. As Dan's eyes followed him from over the chunks of a convenient wood pile, he saw him touch Regan on the shoulder and engage the ranch owner in earnest conversation. Regan nodded several times and twice he shook his head. Then he shrugged his shoulders.

If Callahan had called to see him, it was important for Dan to find out the identity of the ladies. That might have an important bearing. Impressing a wheel barrow into use, Dan lumbered off toward the barn and another load of potatoes. Half way to his base of supplies, Dan

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suddenly dropped the wheel barrow. The taller of the two in the buck board had turned around. It was Marie La Farge.

CHAPTER X

At the same instant that Dan had recognized Marie, the girl had recognized him. Though she was expecting to see him and though she knew from officer Callahan what to expect, the sight, of the smartly apparelled and dashing Irish cowboy transformed into the most boobish looking of the potato peeling gentry was a shock to her. But however great was this shock, the strain on her heart strings was still more powerful.

For a year Marie had lived in a constant turmoil of doubt. Circumstances pointed unmistakably to Malloy's guilt but her heart would not permit her to believe that he had killed her father. If he had, it must have been by accident. No thread of evidence to controvert the facts adduced at the coroner's trial had come to light to relieve in any way the stain upon the reputation of her lover. All Wainright Park believed that Malloy had murdered Jean La Farge in a quarrel over Marie. And from the stand-point of the police there was every evidence, circumstantial though it might be, to prove his guilt. But the most convincing evidence of it to the police was the fact that Malloy had run away. Still, Marie's heart told her that her own attitude toward Malloy had something to do with his going and this thought had kept warm within

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her bosom the love for Malloy which, in spite of everything, would not down.

Then had come officer Callahan. He told her that he had found Malloy, or at least a man whom he suspected of being Malloy. To her own amazement she had absolutely refused to go south for the purpose of identifying him.

“Why don’t you bring him up here?” she had asked.

“Well,” replied Callahan, “I’m not absolutely sure. I don’t want to arrest an innocent man and this Chuck Jones may be Chuck Jones and not Dan Malloy. Still, while there is suspicion against him, the least you can do is to relieve that suspicion. If he isn’t Malloy, you can do him a service and you can do me one, too. We will cross him off our books. If you don’t identify him he will always be under suspicion.”

These arguments left Marie cold. But her heart provided an argument which Callahan knew not of and probably would not have known how to use had he known it.

And here she was with Neenah, the little half-breed maid.

The sight of Marie gave Dan the first real thrill. It held the threat of the greatest danger which he had not yet faced. The well drilled gesture of pulling down the hat stopped half way. Instead, he took the hat off. There was no use pretending with Marie. She knew, and

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the best he could hope was to have her know that he knew, too. If ever a gesture bespoke pleading, that did, homely as it was. Neither spoke. Dan picked up his wheel barrow and shuffled back again to his peeling post. It was like preparing to face the firing squad. But Dan was no coward. He could face the music whatever tune it played.

He didn't have to wait long. Intent as he apparently was on peeling potatoes, his ears were attuned to the foot steps he momentarily expected. Nonchalantly he threw a bucket of potato peelings into the basket and stooped to pick out another spud. In spite of his iron nerves he dropped the potato back in the basket as he heard foot steps behind him. They approached slowly. Dan could not stand the suspense any longer. He looked up in apparent surprise.

As he saw the girl, he rose to his feet and removed his hat, holding it deferentially in both hands as he looked her full in the face. Not a movement or a word escaped him to indicate that he had ever seen her before. The stupidity of expression and the dullness of intellect which he had carefully cultivated did not waver for an instant. Marie's gaze was as level as his, but it was full of pain, full of anxiety and her hands were constantly twining and intertwining, indicative of the struggle going on within her.

Callahan watched the duel of eyes with pro-

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fessional attention. Here was either intense human drama, or a huge bluff. Which was it?

As she looked, Marie's eyes filled with tears. Slowly she looked away from Dan toward Callahan and sadly shook her head.

"It isn't he," she said huskily.

Callahan frowned. Had he been on a wild goose chase all this time?

"Are you sure?" he said, coming close to her and grasping her by the arm.

"Positive," said Marie, turning away.

Dan put on his hat. He pulled it down tighter on his head than ever he had done before.

Turning from Marie, Callahan held out his hand to Dan.

"That lets you out, sonny," he said, though Dan thought he detected keen disappointment in the voice. "I won't pester you any more. Good-bye and good luck."

For once, Dan's Irish tongue had no rejoinder. He said nothing. But his hand shake carried conviction.

"I'll get the team, Miss La Farge, and pick you up here. I want to see Regan a moment." Touching his hat, the officer strode away.

Not until he was out of sight of the two did Marie turn again to the disguised Malloy. Walking slowly toward him, she held out her hand. Dan took it, his surprise evident even in his carefully trained countenance.

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"Tell me again," she said earnestly. "It wasn't you."

Before her eyes there vanished the Chuck Jones she had come down to identify and Dan Malloy, though illy clad, stood before her. All thought of Callahan, of discovery, of anything except the girl before him had left Dan's mind.

"Marie! You know it. You have never doubted me."

Suddenly she reached her arms up and kissed him.

But before he could recover from his astonishment, she was gone.

CHAPTER XI

THE BET

It was the night before the opening of the Stampede. Everyone in Alberta knew that the next three days were holidays. Skeleton crews were all that were left on the ranches all through the Province. Those few had been told off by lot, the unlucky ones having to remain to care for the stock and keep the home fires burning, as it were, when they were as cheerless as could be imagined. It was tough to do chores, when all the world was celebrating an event that took place fifty years ago and one that cast glory on the splendid history of Canada.

Dan Malloy was one of the lucky ones. He had drawn lots with the others, though Blackie, the foreman, had suggested that Chuck ought to stay home and do all of the chores, thus permitting the entire force to be present at the events, and particularly at the Roman races on which twenty thousand dollars of the boss's money had been bet and every bit of the wages of every man jack of them for the next six months. Humble and retiring as Dan had always been, and he had the best of reasons for being so, he was extraordinarily assertive now. One great threat had been removed and that kiss had worked a miracle.

"Like to see you keep me from drawing lots,

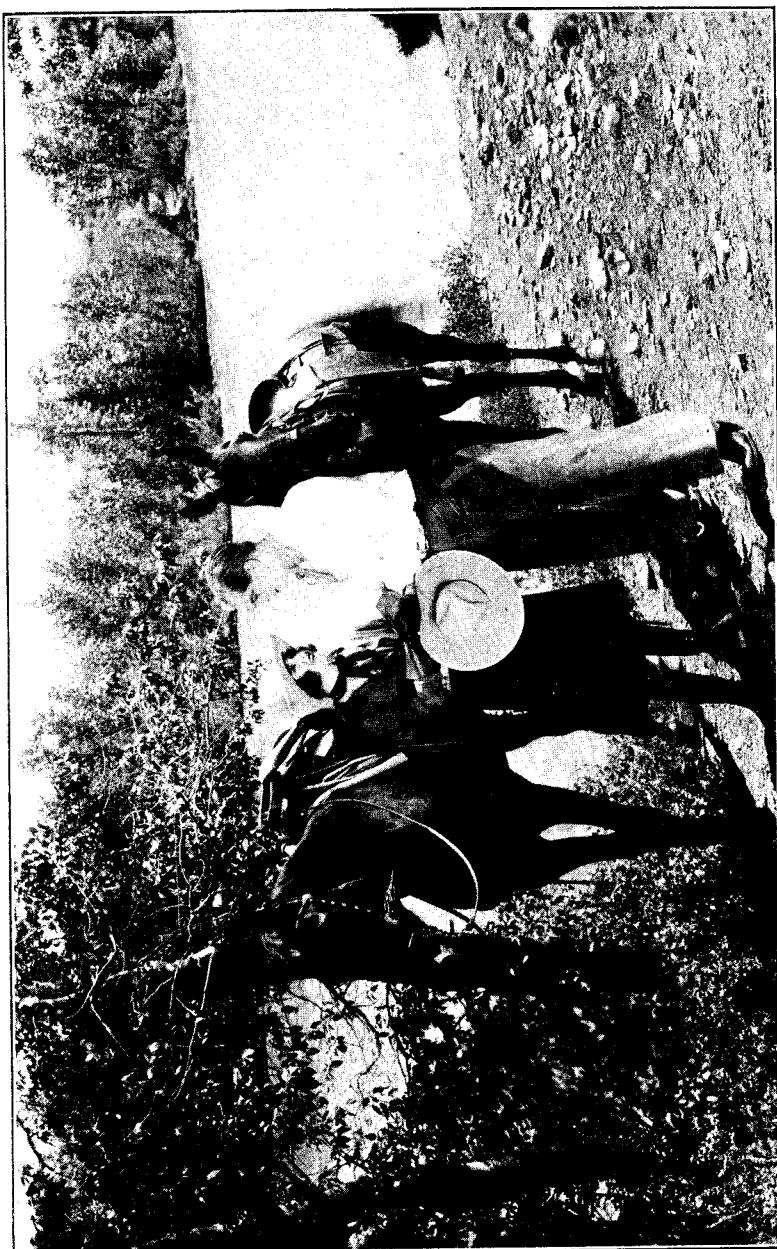
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you big pumpkin," said Dan, as he stepped up to the rail and threw in the slip with his own name on it. "I just hope your name is the last one that comes out of the hat."

The ranch riders expected to see fireworks follow this remarkable evidence of self assertion on Chuck's part. But the latter knew his man. Blackie had a yellow streak as wide as a wagon tongue down his back. All the answer he made was the same kind of an ineffectual kick which Chuck Jones had been dodging now for almost a year. Not one of these kicks would ever be forgotten and every one would demand retribution.

The Malloy luck still held. The name of Chuck Jones was one of the first to be drawn out of the hat.

That night the entire outfit moved into town on whatever vehicles or live stock was handy, the cowboys on their ponies, Chuck Jones appropriately riding the chuck wagon which was going into the chuck wagon race. Regan and his daughter, of course, put up at the Palliser Hotel, the lobby of which was the official headquarters of the stock raising and racing gentry of the Province. Most of the boys, however, found lodging either with friends or in the stables with the horses. To Chuck this was no hardship. Many a night he had spent riding a horse and



"I CAN'T HELP BEING IRISH."

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would gladly have passed all his nights in a stable with his beloved horses.

But if the gentry of the district polish the Palliser bar, the rank and file congregated at Kelly's. Here the old timers always met on the eve of the Stampede to renew old friendships and to place new wagers. Kelly's was anything but ornate. It was rough and ready like its proprietor and like the patrons it attracted, but taken by and large, Kelly held a much larger volume of stakes than the proprietor of the Palliser.

..

All of the cowboys of the Bar O were in early attendance at such ceremonies as Kelly's afforded. So were Morton's riders, and what little any of them had left to bet, was being vociferously wagered on the outcome of the Roman race the next afternoon. It was a cinch that whatever ranch lost would have very little interest in the subsequent events. Dan Malloy was probably the only man in the room who hadn't placed a bet. No one had offered him a wager.

About nine o'clock, Andrew Regan walked into Kelly's. As he made his way through the crowded room to the densely populated bar, a hand grasped his coat sleeve.

"Well, Regan," said a familiar voice, "do you still think your Romans can beat mine tomorrow."

It was Morton who spoke, and as usual his

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voice and manner had the uncanny effect of disturbing Regan. Morton was so sure of himself, so supercilious, so boastful. Regan was a much finer-grained man. The other's brashness always grated upon him. As if this condescending question were not enough, Morton reached out and took one of Regan's battery of stogies from his pocket.

"Thanks," he said, as the crowd laughed at Regan's impatient gesture.

"Certainly I think so," said Regan, "and if my horses go as fast as my cigars do, your Romans won't have a chance."

The crowd, sensing a betting fray far beyond their own ability to emulate, gathered thickly around Regan and Morton. Dan, who had seen his boss come in, moved up to the table behind him. Morton, with a sneer on his face as he spat out the bitten-off end of Regan's stogies, continued in a loud voice:

"Well, Regan old boy, if you still think so, I've got another five thousand that says my team beats yours."

A hush came over the crowd. Everyone looked at Regan, Blackie drawing his breath so sibilantly, that several of Morton's riders laughed in his face. As though Regan might have paid any attention to what he did, Dan started violently shaking his head from side to side. He hated to see his boss plunge any further on a man who

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rode Romans as unscientifically as Corbett did.

Angered as he was, however, Andrew Regan had bet all he cared to.

"I'd sure like to accommodate you, Al," he said reluctantly, "but I'm in as deep now as I can afford."

For answer Morton rose from his chair, took the stogie he had "borrowed" from his mouth and hurled it on the floor. Then with elaborate sarcasm, "I never thought you were a piker."

Word and gesture were as insulting as Morton could make them and they had the desired effect on Regan. Boiling with rage, he leaped to Morton's table and pounding on it until the glasses jumped and clicked together, he shouted:

"That's the first and last time you'll ever say that, Morton! Here's a proposition for you. I bet you horn for horn and hoof for hoof, the Bar O stock against yours."

So confident was Morton of his own team's superiority that he held out his hand to Regan with a shout of delight. Before the echo of it had died away, the humble potato peeler forced his way to Regan's side.

"Say boss," he said, all earnestness, "ain't you goin' awful strong?"

But Regan was riding the heights. He had the bit in his teeth.

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“Don’t you worry, sonny,” he said, patting Chuck on the shoulder, “Ed Corbett ridin’ them speed demons of mine is a combination that can’t be beat.”

CHAPTER XII

THE STAMPEDE

Monday morning dawned clear and bright. That was the only thing that was needed to make the occasion a success. Every other detail had been attended to. The city was decorated from end to end. Eighth Avenue was a blaze of flags and color. In honor of the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the first fort on the Bow River, many of the buildings were emblazoned with placards announcing that on this spot was established the first saloon in Calgary, the first laundry, the first bank, newspaper, government building, hall of entertainment, church or mercantile establishment. Several buildings were covered with false fronts built to represent those first endeavors of civilization to transform the wilderness from its beautiful, primitive state into a first faint resemblance of the metropolis of the West.

As was fitting, the managers of the Exhibition and Jubilee had arranged a huge historical pageant six and a half miles long, to represent the pictorial and picturesque history of the city. Preceded by an escort of North West Mounted Police and an equal number of Indians dressed in all the magnificence of their tribal paint and feathers, the long line of floats and riders wound

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its way through the streets of the city. On the sides of the floats were legends describing the scenes and the historical significance of the paper maché sets, so that all the seventy thousand spectators who lined the streets five and six deep could see and thrill with pride in the glorious changes that fifty years had made.

The presence of a moving picture outfit from Los Angeles, which intended to use the Stampede and the attendant activities as a background for a big super Western picture, added importance to the solemn parade. As cameras ground out the passing eras of the city's life, wave after wave of applause passed up and down the sidewalks like the wind waving Alberta's famous stands of wheat.

Dan Malloy could not keep away from the vicinity of these cameras. At one time he had felt the urge of art. It had led him to Universal City, where his accomplishment as a champion rider had found a real market in the Universal Ranch Rider troupe—at five dollars a day. He had been perfectly happy until he had been asked to double for the star in a dangerous fall from a horse, and learned the next day that that same star was getting two hundred dollars a day. Dan had ingenuously suggested to that worthy that he give him half of the amount for doing the stunt for him. In the mixup that ensued the star emerged with certain abrasions and

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facial swellings that prevented him from working for a week. That was the end of Malloy's career as a star. He had cost the company a cool ten thousand in lay-off time and he was regarded as a difficult man to handle. It was on the chance of seeing this star and finishing what he had so auspiciously begun, that he hung around the cameras. But all he saw was camera men and directors and assistants who roughly and authoritatively ordered him to get out of the way.

His overtures thus haughtily refused, Dan turned his attention to the pageant as it rolled past in historical sequence; the Blackfoots, Bloods, Pigeons and Assiniboines depicting the life of the Indians before the white men came; the granting of the charter of the Hudson's Bay Company, or "The Governor and Company of Adventurers of England Trading into Hudson Bay" as the original title specified; the coming of the adventurous Frenchman who spied out the land and discovered its extent and possibilities; the advent of the fur traders, following in the wake of the explorers; the coming of the Catholic Fathers, bringing salvation to the Indians, and Rev. George McDougall who built the first Protestant church; the expeditions of government explorers and gentlemen sportsmen and hunters; the activities of the Buffalo hunters, the wolvers and the whiskey traders; the lawless acts

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of the traders that brought the North West Mounted Police; a replica of the first fort built in 1874, Ft. MacLeod; the expedition that founded Fort Calgary; the treaties with the Indians; the coming of the ranchmen; the "iron horse"; the first newspaper; the establishment of the first regular stores and mercantile establishments and so on down through the various stages by which the lively little cow town became a thriving bustling modern city.

It took hours for that parade to pass, but it held the intense interest of all who saw it. Dan, whose real interest that day was centered on the horses and the wager of his employer, was lifted high out of himself, his danger and his fears. With those hardy men of old who carried the banner of civilization into the wilderness marching in ghostly effigy before him, his own hopes and fears seemed but petty ephemeral gestures. His masquerade seemed unworthy; his skulking fear of the law did the name of Malloy no credit. Jean La Farge was right. What a name to transmit to his grandchildren. Better that he stand up manfully and shout it to the world, walk up to Callahan, if he saw him again, and tell him, "Here I am, Dan Malloy. I have proven that I can disguise myself so that you can't find me, but it suits me now to admit my identity and take the consequences. I am innocent. You prove me guilty."

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A touch on his shoulder roused Malloy from his day dream. Involuntarily he slid back again into the character of Chuck Jones. It was Regan in his wagon, his daughter beside him. Alberta was dressed in gala attire, with a wide floppy modish hat taking the place of the Stetson and drill riding clothes she affected around the ranch.

"Here, hop in. I'll give you a hitch up to Exhibition Park."

Meekly, Dan hopped in the back of the wagon and Regan thredded his way out to the park. He must make certain that nothing happened to his Roman team or to Corbett. He had made a very foolish bet, and now he had to take every precaution to insure his winning. He had grown to hate Morton. He doubted very much if he would take his old stock even if he did win the race, but Morton would certainly take his if the race went against him. Not that he had lost any of his confidence in winning, but he knew a lot about the uncertainty of horse races and this was the last one he would go into with this high-binder. Just the same he must win this race.

As he drove into the Park he turned over the team to one of his men and inquired about Corbett.

"Run along now daughter. I'll take you to lunch, but I want to see the team and be certain that everything is all right with Corbett."

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He watched the gay little figure with proud eyes as she skipped along in the direction of the grandstand. She was a fine girl and the apple of his eye. He ought never to have risked his fortune,—her fortune—that way. He would never do anything like that again. As Alberta skipped around the corner of the great stands, waving gaily as she went, Regan turned to Chuck.

“Here, Chuck, you keep your eye on them horses,—I’ve bet everything on them but the ranch.”

A sarcastic, harsh voice at his elbow interrupted him.

“Why not bet that, too?” it asked.

Morton stood there, thumbs in the armholes of his vest, his hat on the back of his head and a pipe in his mouth. He always smoked that pipe unless he saw an opportunity to take one of Regan’s stogies. Half a dozen of the Morton riders stood with their boss and their attitudes were indicative of the low opinion their boss held of the sportsmanship of Regan. But Regan shook his head. Malloy took him by the arm as though to lead him away. But Morton stepped around in front. Taking his pipe out of his mouth he spat on the ground.

“I thought you said no one could ever call you a piker,” he said in as insulting a manner as he could say it. And this manner had the

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same effect on Regan as it always did. He was out of hand in a moment. Red rage flared up in eyes. He shook off Dan's detaining hand and faced his tormentor.

"And they won't," he shouted. "I don't want your ranch any more than I want the moon. And I certainly don't want you to have mine. But seein' yo're so cussed set on losin' it, I'll just bet my ranch against yours, only it's like puttin' up a twenty dollar gold piece against a plugged shilling."

And before the startled Malloy could recover he had seized Morton's outstretched hand and angrily shaken it as a vexed puppy might shake a rat.

CHAPTER XIII

WHEN IS ONE EVER SAFE?

Exhibition Park was filling up with eager and laughing spectators all eager to see one of the greatest sights of the generation. Canada was staging her great epic of the West, the great Mecca to which lovers of skill and daring make pilgrimage yearly from every corner of the world. Sport loving Americans were there from all the cities south of the border. They came from as far East as Montreal and Quebec for the thrill of frontier days. It was the last stand of the West against the effete pleasures of the East. In a way it was like the great tournaments of King Arthur's day but it heralded a new chivalry, born of a race of empire builders. And too, it partook of the character of the glatorial combats in the Coliseum at Rome. Only the gladiators had become cowboys, the swords and spears had become lariats and bull whips, and the wild beasts, bucking bronchos and steers.

And in that throng, holding himself in the freedom of one whose crime was fastened on another walked the very man whose vengeance had sent Dan Malloy into hiding and masquerade,—Fred Burgess. Wainright Park had not seen him for a year. The scene of his crimes, big and little, had not worried him much about it, for there

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was only one person there who could in any way connect him with the crime for which the police were so relentlessly tracking Dan Malloy. But three hundred miles is a long way and even if Neenah had suspected that he fired the fatal shot, she would hardly be believed when the evidence pointed so unmistakably at Malloy.

Burgess had grown callous in his security. Perched high up in the bleachers, he intended to enjoy the Stampede to the full. And he had brought his new sweetcart, Nellie Butler with him. Nellie might not be much of a lady, but at least she was no breed and she knew how to wear clothes. She also had the figure to show them off to good advantage. He was proud of Nellie as he had never been proud of Neenah.

But when is any one safe? How could Fred Burgess know that circumstances had conspired to bring Neenah and Marie La Farge to the Calgary Stampede, when by all the rules of logic they should be three hundred miles away in Wainright Park?

Being at Calgary just at that time when all the world seemed to be intent on attending the Stampede, why shouldn't Marie, who had never in all her life seen a Stampede, take advantage of this opportunity? Quite the most natural thing in the world, and all the more reason, since Dan Malloy was probably there too. No wonder, too, that Marie and her maid were looking

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more at the audience than at the colorful opening flourishes of the big show stretched out so gaily before them.

The humor of wild cow milking contests, that set the crowd in hysterics as earnest cowboys held and tried to milk cattle whose mind was in an entirely different direction only to lose all the milk through a cleverly directed kick in just the right place, was all but lost on them, though each cowboy as he came out was eagerly scrutinized. This might well have been a task that the Chuck Jones she had seen might have undertaken without endangering his elaborate incognito. Possibly there was a potatoe peeling race on the program. She looked. None there. Broncho busting, thrilling as it seemed to most of the persons around her, steer riding, awkward and inelegant as it appeared, left them unimpressed as soon as they were satisfied that Dan Malloy was not implicated as a rider.

Presently Neenah touched her mistress on the arm. Thinking she had seen the object of their search, Marie turned to her eagerly.

“Please, Mamsel; I see frien’ down there. Can I go see?” and the bright eyed half breed girl was off like a shot, threading her way in and out of the press in her haste to find a face and figure she had seen for an instant in the crowd high up near the topmost fence.

It was a good ten minutes before she saw

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him again, but she had a singleness of purpose that stood her in good stead and soon she stood directly under the section where he sat. As a particularly daring cowboy was at last thrown from the back of the dangerous outlaw named on the program, Sweet Marie, the whole section in front of her rose up to get a better view. The man that Neenah sought rose with them. To her horror, Neenah saw him put his arm protectingly about the waist of a flashily dressed and an overly red-lipped girl with bobbed hair. She stood looking, rooted to the spot. And as she looked a hardness came into her eyes that had been soft and sentimental before. Still, Neenah thought, it might be his sister. With this thought in mind, Neenah worked her way around to the bench behind Burgess. Then she tightly clasped her hand about his eyes.

“Guess, guess, my Fred, who has foun’ you.”

The little half-breed girl was strong and she had her man at a disadvantage. He could not move without being rough. But he was a man troubled with many things on his conscience and he had little patience with riddles. Nevertheless he could not budge the clasp about his eyes. It was his companion who came to his assistance.

“See here,” she said indignantly. “What is all this, part of the show or a hold up? I did not think they let Indians in the grandstand,” and with that she broke Neenah’s hold.

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Burgess turned around to face the last person he wanted to see then or any other time. Surprise, fear and anger fought for mastery in his face. Anger conquered.

"Get out of here," he roared, purple with rage. "When I left Wainright Park I left you, too—for good. I don't know you any more."

Neenah's surprise was a pathetic thing to see. The man for whom she had made her mistress suffer as few have ever suffered, the man who had promised to marry her and take her away from service and serving, the man she had loved with a dumb trusting love to thus publicly and violently disown her. She held out her hands to him in dumb entreaty. For answer the girl with Burgess slapped her in the face. And Burgess laughed. That laugh rang in Neenah's ears like a death knell. It was also a call to battle, a battle of outraged womanhood. Swiftly she turned and was lost in the crowd, but in her eyes was a determination that boded no good for Burgess. And what is more, in his heart he knew it. He should have been more diplomatic with Neenah. But no man can serve two masters, and as for serving two women, even Solomon, the Wise could prescribe no safe recipe.

Neenah hurried back to her mistress. Her eyes burning with shame and anger. She was almost inarticulate. She stamped her little feet and ground her hands together, to retain her

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composure. It is the Indian's way to be calm, come what may and the stoic strain in her blood stood her in good stead.

"He promise' to marry me—now he laugh in my face," she said with dignity and forced calmness.

"Who, Neenah?"

"That Burgess, the poacher. I see him. Go to him all glad, and he take nozer woman. Never wan' see me no mor'."

"You poor child, what are you talking about?"

And Marie took Neenah into her arms and soothed her as she would had done with a sister. Her gentleness brought the flood of tears that unlocked Neenah's heart and soon she learned the whole story, the one thing that Neenah had locked so securely in her heart that she had daily been a traitor to her gentle, suffering mistress.

"And now I can tell you. It was Burgess shoot Jean La Farge. Not your Malloy. He ver' innocent all tam'. I so sorry I cannot tol' you befor'."

CHAPTER XIV

THE LAST STRAW

Nominally Blackie Smith, the foreman of the Bar O Ranch was the leader of the troop of cowboys that came up to the city for the Stampede. It was his place and that privilege had been confirmed by Regan the night before in Kelly's Saloon, where the latest sporting proposition had been accepted. Discipline had to be maintained away from the ranch even more strictly than on the range. The temptations were greater and the chances of treachery to the entrants and their mounts were such that the strictest kind of supervision was necessary.

Every man on the Bar O payroll knew this and was more than ready to do his part, even to quitting the saloon at eleven o'clock, just as the fun was at its height. When Blackie had given the word, the entire troop joined in a night-cap and with a cheer for Regan, who had paid for the round, marched out to whatever retirement had been arranged. Blackie sent them away and saw that they were well started before he said good-night to the boss and watched him get into a taxi to go to the Palliser. Regan's last word had been a caution as to Corbett and the Palomino pair.

Having no place in particular to go and no

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duty to perform, the potatoes having all been peeled for the next three days, Chuck Jones also saw the boss off to his hotel. But he did it very unobtrusively. He also thought it would be a good thing to see Blackie off to the stable, where both of them were to sleep. Possibly Blackie would loosen up and buy a taxi, too.

Just as Blackie was thinking about this matter and trying to decide in his mind about such an expenditure, the foreman of the Morton Ranch came out of Kelly's. He was somewhat teed up. Seeing Blackie on the sidewalk, he called to him. While they were rivals, due to their respective positions, they were always fond of each other and the best of friends.

"Hey, Blackie, I just can't go and turn in without having one drink with you. You know tomorrer we will be busy and my gang is going to lick the tar out of your outfit. So tonight is the last time I'll have a chance to buy you a drink with my own money. Tomorrer I'll buy it with your'n. How about it?"

"Can't see for the life of me how you got that'a way, Bust," replied Blackie in the free and easy raillery that cowboys affect. "As I figger it you'd be jest spendin' my money now if I let yo buy me a drink tonight. Yo all might need that there money to tide yo over to the end of the month."

"I ain't afeared uf that. I got plenty," and

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he tapped his pocket. Blackie and Chuck saw that it was bulging with bills.

"But I'll tell you what I'll do. We jest oughter part sociable, so I propose that you buy me a drink with the money that'll be mine to-morrer. You can't hospitably refuse to do that. And you might invite your slick ear friend in too. He looks as tho' he needed a drink."

Slick ear is a term applied to cattle without a brand, and while it is no insult to apply it to a human being, it usually raises a laugh at his expense. Blackie laughed and turned to Chuck.

"C'mon in Chuck. We'll buy this night hawk just one drink to show him there's no hard feelin's about tomorrer's go," and he turned in the direction of the door again.

"Tain't right, Blackie," expostulated Chuck, pulling at Blackie's arm. "The boss expects us to go home and we orter go."

"Say, if yo don't want to have a drink on this guy's money, yo don't have to. Yo can go up to the stable alone, can't yo? I got to be a generous feller with his money."

Chuck saw the wavering Bust and the willing Blackie go in arm and arm. He knew what that meant. So he followed them. At the end of each round he politely suggested that that was sufficient and that it was time to go. But one drink led to another, as it will do, and by the time Bust was maudlin, Blackie was scarcely bet-

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ter. It was a whole hour later that Chuck fairly dragged Blackie to the door and piled him into a taxi.

So it was that Blackie avoided the boss the next morning. Fortunately nothing had happened to the boys. They had all turned in in good shape. Chuck had administered a few pails of cold water to the aching head of Blackie in the morning and had fairly kicked him out of bed and into his clothes. He only smiled at the tongue lashings with which Blackie relieved his feelings. He was too unsteady on his feet even to attempt the usual kick.

"Guess you don't want to see the parade, Blackie. All you got to do is turn around twice and the whole world is a parade to you. Hope you feel better when I get back."

The first thing he had done when he returned to the Park with Mr. Regan was to look up Blackie. As has been intimated, he was not the same Chuck Jones that went downtown. He had seen a vision, a vision of brave and hardy men, who had dared everything to conquer an empire. The pageant had awakened a pride that no amount of caution or fear could ever extinguish.

Chuck found Blackie leaning against a fence in the inner corral. Both hands were stretched out, the fingers of the hands leaning on the tops of the boards. Chuck's self-assertion needed

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just a little expression. Here was an opportunity. Shuffling around to the back of that fence, the top of which was high over his head, he began to climb it. He was directly back of Blackie. As he reached the board on which Blackie's fingers rested, he deliberately stepped on the hand, and went on up as unconcernedly as though Blackie had not raised a shout that could be heard all the way out to the track.

When he reached the top and looked down on the foreman, who was jumping about and holding his injured hand as though he had been shot, he sat down on the topmost board and laughed. Blackie shook his fist at him—it was the left fist.

“Why the squawk? You can drink with the other hand, can’t yer?”

“You consarned, everlastin’ blankety, blank piece of potato blight, you jest come down here and I’ll—”

“You’ll what? What’ll you do?” and Chuck jumped down directly in front of the raging, swearing foreman. Blackie took one good look at Chuck. His left hand, with which Chuck had admonished him to do his drinking henceforth, was drawn back to strike. But the steadfast, steely look in Chuck’s eyes, so different from any look the foreman had ever seen there before, deterred him. The left hand showed no anxiety about connecting with the objective. Instead

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Blackie put it back in his pocket and grumbly walked away. His aching brain wondered vaguely what had come over the spuds peeler. Usually he took everything so good naturedly. He even let the cook insult him, which is the worse insult that can be handed to a ranch hand.

"And I'm tellin' you somethin' else, too," shouted Chuck after the retreating figure of the foreman. To impart this knowledge he thought best to come closer. It was big news.

"Not ten minutes ago, the boss bet the whole ranch against the Morton ranch on the Roman race. And if Corbett ain't in shape to ride that race you will be the one to have to do it. I'm tellin' yer so's you'll sober up an' be on yer toes."

If the news didn't have all of the desired effect, it at least loosened the foreman's tongue. In a surprising time the whole outfit knew of the bet. Never had it ever happened before that a ranch the size of the Bar O had been staked on the running of a single race. Either the boss must have had more confidence than they had thought, or he had been a bigger fool than they thought.

As Chuck turned away from making his first gesture of self-expression he saw two policemen walking up the path outside of the high board fence over which he had just climbed. They were talking and the voice that was speaking

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sounded strangely familiar. Chuck listened and as he listened he held his breath, “—and they said you were up Peace River,” he heard the voice he now recognized as that of Callahan saying: “She failed to identify him, but maybe you’d like to have a look at him. I understand that he is here with the Bar O outfit. He’s a dead ringer for the description of Malloy I read on the card. Wait here a moment. I’ll see if I can find him in the barn.”

Malloy gingerly stepped over to the fence and looked through. Not two feet away from him, separated only by a thin board fence was Bill Harkness, the only man in Canada that he did not want to see just then, and probably the only one who could identify him. Was the Malloy luck running out? Or was this just another challenge to his ingenuity?

CHAPTER XV

WIN OR LOSE

A few moments before, under the inspiration of the Historical Pageant, Malloy was in the mood for delivering himself up to justice and taking his chance as Dan Malloy. But now for some reason, the proposition did not seem so attractive. Just to walk out on the path and say: "Here I am, Dan Malloy," seemed kind of blah, like the near beer back home. What he really needed was some striking dramatic moment when the thing could be done with a flourish.

As he looked at the back of Bill Harkness' head, so near to him through the fence, an idea occurred to Dan that seemed to average up his determination to give himself up, and his purpose to wait for an appropriate time and place. Stooping, he picked up a long straw. Inserting it between the boards of the fence he began tickling the left ear of the policeman. Harkness slapped at it idly as though it had been a fly. Dan tried again. Another slap. The next time Harkness turned all the way around and made a cut with his riding crop at the supposed fly. But Dan had dodged down and Harkness walked away from a place so infested with horse flies.

"Well," said Dan almost to himself, "I gave him another chance to catch me. He's a bum

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catcher. I'll just wait a little longer before I give him the third chance."

But there was still the chance that Callahan might stray in and see him. So he sneaked up to the barn and slouched inconspicuously in the doorway. Through long practice, Chuck Jones had managed to become able at will, to appear and disappear noiselessly and without attracting attention. And so it happened that as he came in, he saw that red clad figure of Callahan as it was going out of the door of the barn. He naturally made no move to stop it or to notify anyone that he was present. He just disappeared.

Callahan rejoined Harkness.

"They don't know where he is now. He might be in Hell for all the foreman cares. I just asked him and he was damning him from Hell to Breakfast for all kinds of a boob. Seemed to be particularly sore on him. I suppose he'll show up sooner or later and we'll run into him. I sure thought I was on a hot scent when I spotted him. Same color eyes and hair; same height and I knew he was a cowboy the moment I saw him wheeling his potatoe barrow. Can't fool me on cowboy legs. But nobody ever saw him ride—except once." And Callahan went into a gale of laughter at the recollection.

"It was one time when I was up at the ranch," he continued. "I was nosing around to see what

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I could see. And this buckaroo had just told the gang that he could ride. That was just what I wanted to know, too, so I sneaked around the fence and looked on. The gang was all making fun of him and he was talking it all serious like. The outlaw, Sweet Marie, was in the corral and that morning she had thrown Corbett. Well, this Jones gets up rather clumsy like and at the very first buck he goes off higher'n a kite. No more horesmanship'n a rabbit. That was enough for me."

"What did Marie La Farge say when she saw him?" asked Harkness.

"She just took one good look at him and shook her head. Told me later that I ought to be ashamed to take her all that way just to see a potatoe peeler, when this Malloy was such a swell dresser. Girls are funny."

"Wasn't so bad for you, though," said Harkness with a wink at his companion. "Marie's a mighty pretty girl. Don't know when I've seen a prettier."

"Yes, she's pretty all right, but cold. And she had a funny little breed maid along with her. Watched me like I was going to run off with her mistress all the time. But I was all business. I like 'em jollier than Miss La Farge. Take that little Alberta Regan, for instance. She's a jolly little thing and lots of company. And the prettiest blond you ever laid your eyes

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on. And, by gosh, there she is now. I want you to meet her."

Both officers raised their hats to the trig little figure under the parasol. Harkness was duly introduced and Alberta turned on the hundred candle power smile. She was glad to see any acquaintance of Callahan's and Bill was not so unprepossessing himself.

"I certainly hope your man wins that race, Miss Alberta," said Harkness. "The whole towns talking about the twenty-five thousand-dollar bet that is up on that Roman race."

"Twenty-five thousand nothing," said Callahan, eagerly. "These Canadian ranchers are the limit when they get going. I forgot to tell you. When I was out to the stable I heard that Regan had bet the whole works on that Roman race. They tell me that he has bet his ranch against Morton's ranch."

Little Alberta went white. But she was a thoroughbred. From her smile one would have thought that it was the most enjoyable thing she had ever heard. She knew about the other bets. If Corbett was beaten they would be paupers. Yet she smiled and joked.

"Why do men have to take things so seriously. Father is just a boy after all. I don't think it would be right for him to keep the other ranch anyway, do you?"

"Well, you better let him win it before you

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try to give it back. If I were you I'd keep it though. It might come in handy for your father to use as a wedding gift." Bill was facetious, but he winked at Callahan as he said it, and Callahan did not look so shocked.

"We're looking for Chuck Jones, Miss Alberta," Callahan said. "Do you happen to know where he is?" He did not care to have Harkness continue along the line of his last remark. He might have something to say to Alberta alone about it, but not here. And besides, Regan might lose the ranch he had. What then?

"Why, I have not seen him since we brought him up from the city where he was looking at the parade. He is probably in the stable. I certainly would not expect to see him here in the grandstand."

When Regan sought out his daughter to take her to lunch, he found her in a reflective and unusually quiet mood.

"What ails you, Alberta? Has anyone been annoying you?"

The girl pulled the tall man down beside her.

"Is it true, Father," she said earnestly, "that you have bet the ranch, too, in addition to everything else that we have?"

Regan looked at his child quickly. He was surprised that she had heard so soon. He would much rather have been the one to tell her. He had the feeling that she did not approve, that

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she was gently calling him down. She had done this before, for little things he had failed to do. But this was different. And he was none too proud of it himself. Nevertheless, he must put a good face on it now before her.

“Sure,” he said confidently. “I bet the whole works. We can’t lose. And it means two ranches instead of one.” And he looked down into her face with a smile of as much warmth as he could manage. His own anxiety he did not dare permit her to see. Putting his hand under her chin, Regan uptilted Alberta’s face until he could look directly into the big black eyes that formed so startling a contrast to her flaxen hair.

“You’re with me, aren’t you?” he asked, a note of anxiety creeping into his tone.

Biting her lip to steady herself, Alberta reached up her arms and threw them around her father’s neck. But her voice was steady and full of love as she said,

“Yes, Daddy—win or lose. I’m with you.”

CHAPTER XVI

THE CHUCK WAGON RACE

The first event of the afternoon, directly after luncheon, was the Chuck Wagon Race. Outside of the Roman race, which came later the same afternoon, and the Stage Coach Race on Friday, this was one of the most exciting events. In addition there was a Chuck Wagon Race every day, winding up with a grand finale on Friday. There were prizes for each day and then a grand prize for the wagon that won on the last day and for the one that won the most times and for the wagon that had averaged the best time for the five races.

But the best thing about the Chuck Wagon Race was the fact that it always afforded a lot of comedy. Its conditions were such that there was a minimum of danger, a maximum of thrill and a splendid chance for the comedians of each camp to exercise their talent for the benefit of the crowd. The wild cow milking contest earlier in the day had afforded much the same kind of entertainment, on the part of the cowboy, Nick Altrocks.

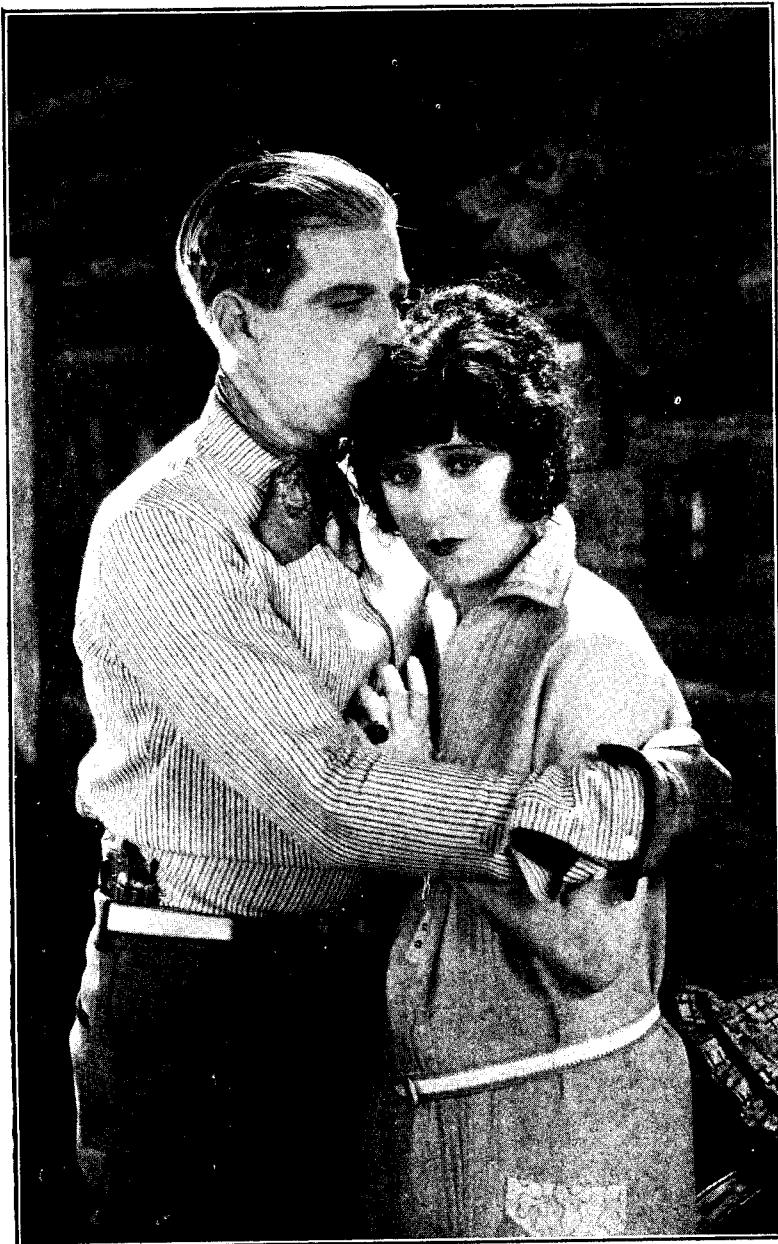
It is possible that some who read this have never been to a Stampede and that they don't know what a chuck wagon is. The word, so applied will not be found in many dictionaries. But

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throughout the West the camp wagon which provides the food for the cowboys on round-up, or away from the ranch, is called a chuck wagon. In addition to the camp stove, the dishes and food lockers, there are also compartments for the stowage of the cowboys' bed-rolls, the running-irons, horse-shoeing outfits and what not. With all of this miscellaneous baggage it is little wonder the name "chuck wagon" was given to it. Certainly everything was chucked in it that could not go on the horse and a cowboy hates to have anything on a horse at all but his lariat.

As the bugle blew for the afternoon show to begin, the sight that met the eyes of the tenderfoot in the grandstand was disconcerting. Arrayed along the infield, just beyond the track proper were eight chuck wagons, each arranged just as it would be if the outfit were on an official round-up. Back of each wagon was a canvas tent, one end attached to the wagon, the other held up by poles at the two corners. Each pole was held steady by a couple of guy ropes held to the ground with wooden pins.

This tent fly was about ten feet long and afforded shelter for the cook and his water barrel, stove and other paraphernalia as well as for the men when they were eating. At the start of the race, the men were to be seated under the flap as they would be in camp. This is, two or three of them were seated. The driver was



"I NEVER REALLY DOUBTED YOU, DAN."

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on the seat, and in this form of wagon the driver's seat is not covered by the canvas that is stretched on bows over the part of the wagon back of him. The four horses attached to the wagon were either tied or a cowboy, sometimes two, held them. There were five men to a team, one driver and four cowboys, each mounted. The horses of the riders were picketed behind the tent flap.

In front of each wagon stood two sugar barrels. There was no sugar in them, but a sugar barrel is bigger than any other kind of barrel and therefore more conspicuous, for these barrels were stakes, or buoys, to use a nautical term for a strictly land race. It isn't any worse than to speak of a prairie schooner. The two barrels, each numbered, were directly in line with the wagons, but at different distances apart. The distance between the barrels varied from right to left. That is the distance between the two barrels in front of the first team, that on the extreme right, or east end of the line might have been a hundred feet, the distance between those on the left of the first team, eighty feet, the distance diminishing with each team.

The announcer through a megaphone explained, for the benefit of those who had never seen a Chuck Wagon Race, that this was to equalize the distance that the teams had to go before they turned into the track. Each wagon

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had to cut a figure eight between the two barrels in front of it, passing the first barrel on the left, the second on the right and the first again on the left and so on into the track.

Then it was a straight away race, once around the track and under the wire in front of the judges stand. The explanations being over, the announcer shouted.

“Are you ready.” “Get set,” and then there was a pistol shot as the signal to start. Each driver knew his team and if he was able to control it properly in the excitement, that left the other four men to take down the two lengths of stove pipe, pack it and the stove in the wagon, with all the other things that were under the flap, strike the flap, tie everything securely in the wagon and give the word to the driver that all was ready. One or two of the men could assist the driver in getting the four-horse team started in the proper direction, but thereafter they could not help him at all, but must ride at the back of the wagon, in such a way as not to obstruct the passage of any other team that might attempt to pass. These Four Horsemen of the Chuck Wagon, though, were expected to finish the race well up behind the wagons to which they were attached.

The names of the ranches which entered the wagons were painted or stamped in bold black letters on the canvas sides of each wagon, usu-

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ally a replica of the brand that the ranch used on its cattle. The places were drawn each day by lot. On this first day the Bar O chuck wagon had drawn the second position. Morton's chuck wagon adorned with two v's, one a capital and one a small v, was next to the left. Of course this was the luck of the draw, but nothing could have suited the Big and Little V boys better. All through the Stampede these two ranch outfits had been lined up to fight each other as if there were no other contestants at the party. The whole country knew of the rivalry of these two ranches and it added a lot of interest to every contest, irrespective of who else might be in it and of who was the actual winner.

Corbett, the star rider of the Bar O, was the driver of the Bar O Chuck Wagon. It was evident to the officials and to the spectators that for these two outfits, no other chuck wagons existed at all. They were going to fight it out alone anyway. This rivalry was urged by many later as the real reason for what happened, though the judges rightfully pointed to the guilty water barrel that the Big and Little V boys left behind as evidence that it was pre-meditated.

At any rate the V-v driver had calculated with deadly accuracy the time it would take for the Bar O outfit to round the last barrel and turn into the track. The Bar O stuff got packed

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first and the team started. Stevens had not received the word to go from his own riders and as a matter of fact they were not ready. They were so busy watching the other packers that things slipped through their fingers.

The stove, even, was not lashed tight. They must have known that the judges would disqualify them as soon as they saw that, even if they didn't for leaving the water barrel out of the wagon. Nevertheless they started at the same time that the Bar O started. The Bar O had a longer loop to make to round its barrels, but when they were past the second one they were virtually in the track, only having the width of their outfit to go. The Vv wagon had a shorted loop but a longer run on the track. However, Stevens had calculated all this, as well as the probable speed of the two teams.

As Stevens got started, a great shout went up from the audience, informing him of the water barrel left behind, and as the team turned around the first barrel stake the stove fell out of the wagon. But Stevens did not stop. As he rounded the second barrel he was seen to rein in his team. Possibly he was afraid to make the turn at such speed. Possibly he had another thought in mind. Anyway, when he had slowed down sufficiently, he urged his team on again to the uttermost of their speed, using his whip for all he was worth.

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Now, of course the track at no place was wide enough for eight camp wagons to drive abreast. It was difficult for four, though there had been a race once when four chuck wagons had run a dead heat at the Stampede and had divided the money accordingly. But it had never happened that more than two or three were ready to swing into the track at the very same instant. There was always some difference in the speed of the men packing up the wagons.

The great advantage that any team enjoyed by reason of a quick pack was to secure the pole position on the track. The track was long enough so that a good driver could easily hold it at the turns, and it was not necessary to swing very wide to stay on all four wheels.

It seemed to everyone that Stevens was bending his energy to get in this pole position, until he eased his team up. Then it looked from the grandstand as though he was afraid of a collision with the Bar O team. He had made the closest possible turn around his last barrel and when he hit the track he was on the very inside edge of the track. He did not turn out one foot to let the Bar O team have a chance to swing. Instead of that Corbett later asserted that Stevens turned his team deliberately into the Bar O wagon, as the wagon was making its turn.

But whether by accident or intention, a col-

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lision was inevitable. The two teams came together with a crash that could be heard way across the quarter-mile track. The Bar O was of course at a disadvantage. It was turning, whereas the other was straight away and on all four wheels. The Vv wagon withstood the shock without so much as a broken wheel; the Bar O wagon turned completely over, pulling down the wheel pair of horses, and throwing its assortment of camp truck out onto the track. The lead horses smashed their whiffletrees and dashed down the track driverless, for Corbett was under the wagon.

Attendants rushed from all quarters to the smashed wagon, and Corbett's own quartette of riders, hurriedly dismounting, went to his assistance. They had to lift the wagon off his prostrate body. And when they at last pulled him to his feet, he sank back again in a heap, groaning with pain. There was a call for a doctor and the ambulance that is always handy at a Stampede came up on the double quick. The doctor gave Corbett a hurried examination. He shook his head. Dr. Ralph was a friend of both Regan and Alberta and he knew what this would mean to them both.

As Corbett was placed in a stretcher, Regan himself, came up panting. He had seen the danger and while not a suspicious man he was very strongly of the opinion that it was an inten-

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tional accident. But his main anxiety, of course was for Corbett.

"What's the damage, Doc?" gasped Regan.

Dr. Ralph put his hand on the other man's shoulder before he spoke and Regan read in his eyes that it was serious.

"I'm sorry old man," he said, "Corbett's leg is broken."

CHAPTER XVII

THE SUBSTITUTE RIDER

Corbett's accident was a terrific blow to Regan. It made no difference about the Chuck Wagon Race, though of course he would protest it. But no amount of protest would mend Corbett's broken leg. Regan went over to the stretcher on which the injured man was being carried to the ambulance. He was in a daze.

"How did it happen, Corbett?" he asked.
"I'm awfully sorry. Are you hurt bad?"

"Couldn't be worse for us, Boss. Don't mind about me. Call off your bets on the Roman race if you can," and he sank back on the stretcher.

Call them off. Could he do that? With anyone else he could, but with Morton, that was hardly possible. But he would try. Morton had been seated right in front of him in the grandstand, and he had taken this box on purpose to enjoy the other's discomfiture. Regan slowly made his way back to his seat. All the elasticity had gone out of his step; all the confidence out of his heart and his face somehow seemed older and more careworn.

As he entered the little box, Morton turned around to him, a mingled look of fear and sat-

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isfaction on his face. By no stretch of imagination could anyone say there was any sorrow there. However, he tried to put a little in his voice he said:

“That was a tough break for you, Andy. Is your boy much scratched up?”

“Couldn’t be worse. Under the circumstances, I guess I’ll have to call off my bet with you on the Roman Racc and I’m goin’ to advise all my men to do the same.”

“Oho! So you’re a welcher, too, as well as a piker. I’ll be damned if I ever thought that of you before, and I’ve known you all these years. Welcher, Welcher.”

The real reason why Regan had been inveigled into the huge bets was that he hated to be called a piker. He had always been cautious. It had always paid him to be. The only times he had ever lost were when he had allowed someone’s speculative instinct or advice to sway him. As a boy he had been called a piker because he hated to bet and when he did it was such infinitesimal sums that the other boys laughed at him. The same thing had happened at college, and one of the worst battles he had ever had, had been with his chum when he had, half in earnest and half in fun called him a piker. That was the real reason that he had fallen so easily for Morton’s bet—the appellation of Piker.

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To be called a piker was bad enough and it made his blood boil, but to be called a welcher and in front of the whole grandstand—it was absolutely unbearable. Furthermore, Regan had had a strange hunch that this accident to Corbett was no accident at all. Now he was morally certain that it had all been planned by this same arch fiend, Al Morton. He saw it all now, now that it was too late. But there was no way to prove what he suspected, and unless he could prove it there was no way to get out of the bet.

It isn't to be supposed that Regan sat calmly and thought out all this. The thoughts ran through his brain like lightning. Like red hot darts they stabbed him to madness. Losing all control of himself, as he realized his utter impotence against the man he now knew had contrived this plot against him, he made a dash at him over the low rail of the box. But Morton was ready for that. He had estimated the Regan temper and he knew how far he could go and when the fighting would begin. He had friends in the box with him who caught Regan and his blows fell harmlessly short. But his tongue was unhampered and unrestrained.

"You vile, dirty, cheap scoundrel, you mucker you. You planned all this. You crooked gambler, you ordered your team to run Corbett down to get him out of the way. I'll have the

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law on you for this. The judges will never let you get away with it. But not even you, you swine, can call me a welcher. I'll run this Roman race even if I have to stick my cookie on the Palominos. And all my bets stand. My men can do as they please. And when the race is over, look out for me. The first time I ever see you I am going to give you such a licking that no one on the Vv ranch will recognize you."

And with that he stormed out of the box and hurried away to the stable.

"Where's Blackie?" he demanded excitedly. "He'll have to ride the Roman Race. He is the only one who has even exercised that team."

"Blackie's drunk," said a cowboy, bluntly.

"Drunk as usual," groaned Regan.

"No, drunker'n usual," replied the cowboy disloyally.

"Well, I don't see anything for it. You'll have to sober him up and get him in shape. I've seen that man do some very surprising things even when he was dead drunk and he can ride drunk or sober."

Blackie had already been told that Corbett was out and he had been preparing for the race. The shock of Corbett's injury, with its aftermath on himself, had done a lot to sober him up at that. In somewhat crestfallen manner he did his best to assure the boss that he could ride just

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as well as Corbett. Corbett's shoes, shirt and trousers had all been taken into Blackie's room at the stable.

Though he had been hiding from the law all day and had been remarkably successful in dodging the two representatives who were so anxious to come across him, Dan Malloy had not missed anything of the entertainment in the arena. He had seen the Chuck Wagon Race and had been in a position to assure himself that it was no accident that had put Corbett out of the Roman Race.

Dan knew as well as everyone and better than most, what the lack of Corbett, little as he liked his technique, meant to the Palominos. All unknown to anyone about the ranch, he had ridden each of them separately and he knew just how speedy they were. He knew too that for the best results on a circular track Corbett did not have them hitched up right. Then he thought of Regan losing that splendid ranch and of little Alberta dowerless, perhaps even hungry. And as he thought and thought, shuffling toward the stable, the same exalted feeling that had possessed him as he watched the procession of the brave and hardy men who had made possible the settlement of Calgary and the great Northwest came over him again. The mantle of their splen-

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did spirit and achievement fell over him like a garment.

Hardly realizing what he was doing, Dan made a dash for the foreman's room, knocking over a cowboy on the way.

"Whose goin' to ride the Roman Race?" he asked as he stopped to help the cowboy to his feet.

"Blackie, I guess. What do you care. You didn't bet a year's wages, did you?" he growled.

But Chuck Jones was gone.

Bursting open the door of the foreman's room, he found Blackie on the floor, trying desperately to get on Corbett's sneaks. He already had the shirt on. One shoe lay on the floor. Dan sat down beside the foreman and hurriedly put on the left shoe. Blackie was in as ill a temper as a drunken man could possibly be in.

"Here you damned spud cleaner. What're you trying to do? They're waitin' for me now. I haven't a instinct to lose. Gimme that shoe."

For answer Dan snatched the other shoe off Blackie's foot. Then he gave Blackie a shove that sent him sprawling his length on the straw.

"Gimme that shirt. I'm going to ride this race, not you."

And with that he fairly pulled the shirt right off the foreman's back. Blackie was too astonished to speak. But while Dan was putting on

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the long trousers, rather nobby they were, too, with gray stripes such as are worn with a Prince Albert, for Corbett had a flare for style in his make up, Blackie got cautiously to his feet. Carefully creeping around to the back of Dan he climbed up the side of the wall on a ladder and dropped on the back of the defenceless Dan, one leg in and one leg out of the trousers. Taken at this disadvantage it was several moments before Dan could get a hold that would break the desperate arms that encircled his neck. But when he did, he rained blow after blow on the head of the foreman. When he had rendered him all but unconscious, he dumped him into a grain bin and finished putting on the Roman rider's rig, even to the handkerchief that Corbett usually wore about his head. Corbett fondly thought that made him a Roman.

Dashing madly out of the barn, Dan hurried to the paddock. There were the Palominos waiting for Blackie and certain defeat. The Bar O men were standing about in all attitudes of dejection. He might have some difficulty in convincing them that he was able to ride. To do it he would have to give up his alias. They probably had heard of Dan Malloy. But worse than that, he saw as he dashed along the two red coated figures that he had been dodging all the day. Callahan and Harkness were naturally in-

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terested to see how the Bar O would make out without the services of Corbett.

Would they stop him before he could even get started on his great renunciation? Well, not if he could possibly help it. He was in for this thing now and he meant to carry it through to the bitter end.

Shouts went up, "Here he comes! Hurry! They are starting now! The starter has given the second warning!" Then someone noticed that the figure with Corbett's riding rig was not Blackie.

"Here, what's happened? Whose this? Where's Blackie? Why it's the potatoe peeler. Chuck Jones as I'm alive. The very nerve of him."

"Listen, fellers" shouted Dan all out of breath with the rush, "I'm not Chuck Jones any longer. I'm Dan Malloy of Cheyenne, and I'm a damned good Roman rider. I'm goin' to win this race for the boss."

If the Bar O boys were amazed at this, the two officers were more so.

"It's him all right," said Harkness excitedly, "Grab him quick."

"Not yet," said Dan, and much as he hated to do it he aimed a smash at Harkness's head that knocked him into the arms of Callahan. Then jumping on the nigh Palominos he tore the reins

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away from the cowboy holding them and was away like a shot.

But the delay had put him at a terrible disadvantage. The pistol shot had rung out as Dan's team emerged from the paddock. Fair warning had been given and here he was fifty yards behind the leaders.

"It's a false start, Daddy," said Alberta to her father, excitedly, "The Bar O team is way behind."

"My God, with such a start he hasn't a chance anyway. Aren't they going to send them back?"

Evidently they were not. All the conditions of the race had been complied with and the judges, could not help themselves, though they knew perfectly what such a handicap would do to Regan's team.

"And what I'd like to know is who's riding those horses."

As if in answer to his question the megaphone man shouted loud and clear,

"Dan Malloy of Cheyenne ridin' Regan's team in place of Ed Corbett."

Regan looked hard at the flying figure. So did Alberta. So did Morton in the box just below Regan. He never heard of Dan Malloy and with the bum start he had, Morton wasn't afraid of any rider on the face of the earth. He didn't have a chance to catch his team. The

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Bar O ranch was as good as his, right now. He gave a yell. As the Palominos swept into their stride right in front of the grand stand, and they were traveling as they had never traveled for Corbett, Regan gasped in hollow, amazed fashion,

“It ain’t Blackie—and it ain’t Dan Malloy—it’s—it’s Chuck Jones—And may the Lord help us now.”

CHAPTER XVIII

DAN MALLOY OF CHEYENNE

If the announcement that Dan Malloy of Cheyenne was riding a race for Al Regan gave that same Regan no thrill, there were others in the grand stand that got thrill aplenty from the news. One of these was Marie La Farge. Marie scarcely understood her own feelings these last few days. But she was beginning to realize that she had not come all the way to Calgary with Callahan for the purpose of convicting her suspected lover of murder. Furthermore, she knew that her delay in returning was not occasioned by any overwhelming passion for the contests at the Stampede or any surpassing curiosity about the crowds of people who attended. She had to admit to herself that her one and only interest there was Dan Malloy. Having admitted this Marie was much happier in one way. For she was above all things an honest young woman, and when one is honest, perfectly honest with one's self, a long step has been taken in the solving of many of life's deepest problems.

Marie La Farge had no particular interest in the Roman Race as such, but when it was announced that Dan Malloy was riding, that race became for the moment the most important

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thing under the sun. How could she know that the winning or losing of it meant so much to Regan and to his daughter? But she was fully aware of the danger that Malloy ran in thus exposing his identity when Callahan was in the audience. And though she now knew from her maid that Malloy was innocent and that Fred Burgess was the guilty one, she had yet to announce this fact to Callahan. She could not find him. It did not diminish in any way the bravery of Malloy in thus risking the liberty that he had so skillfully preserved for this entire year under the watchful eyes of the whole North West Mounted Police. It must have been a powerful reason that caused him to do it. And it had nothing to do with her. Was it on account of that pretty little blond daughter of his boss? She wondered. But to give her credit, she did not wonder long. She had implicit faith in the constancy of Dan Malloy. When he had won her heart he had won it all.

The thing that she had to do now was to find Callahan and tell him the truth as she had heard it from Neenah. But that could wait until the race was over, and it had just begun.

Another who found startling interest in the megaphone announcement was Burgess. Immediately he had cast off Neenah in such uncompromising fashion under the eyes of Nellie

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Butler, he had repented it. Neenah was the only person in the world who knew of any motive for the shooting of Jean La Farge. And, although he was certain that he had definitely fastened the crime on Malloy, with Neenah antagonized, he could think of many good and sufficient reasons why it might not stick. His first impulse was to find Neenah and try to mollify her. But there was Nellie. He would have a devil of time trying to explain this matter to her. It certainly was a bad mess. Better let the matter work itself out. Another thing that was disconcerting to Burgess was to have this fellow Malloy, who ought to be afraid to have his name mentioned in public and who should by all rights be seeking seclusion, attracting the attention of seventy thousand people at the Stampede. Would he dare to denounce this Malloy to the police? Hardly, with Neenah so near and so mad.

As for Malloy himself. He was not thinking of anything but those fifty yards that he had to make up to be in the race with the leaders. His team was footing well, better than he had hoped. And he was slowly gaining, but so slowly. Hugging the rail, Dan was taking advantage of every foot of ground, but fifty yards to make up in a mile is a big handicap. Out ahead he saw that Morton's team was in the lead. Being so far behind he had no fight on his hands as yet in the

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matter of position. He could spare a look now and then at his opponents, as they rounded a turn in the track. He knew Morton's Romans because he had heard them described, a pair of well matched bays.

But now he saw to his intense satisfaction that one of the four contestants was slowly coming back to him. He *was* gaining. At the half mile mark, as he finished in front of the grand stand he was even with them. Shouts of:

"Malloy, Malloy. Go it Malloy," came to his ears in the din of applause. It was music to his ears. Some one wanted him to win. Taking the quarter turn wide he started to lap the second pair.

In the grand stand pandemonium reigned. From abject misery Regan was starting to take an intense and pleasurable interest in the race. Alberta was standing on top of her seat shouting her little lungs out and waving her floppy hat. Morton's face was a study as he saw the Palominos creeping up inch by inch, and when they passed the black and white pair at the half mile mark, the first doubt of his ability to win the race assailed him.

To add to his unrest the exuberant joy of the man with whom he had bet the limit kept expressing itself in an abandoned waving of arms and hat. Soon the hat began to land on his head,

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as Regan brought it down in sweeping gestures, expression of his rising spirits. As Regan's spirits soared those of Morton sank. Outside of the first half mile he did not enjoy that race one little bit. It was like cutting out his heart, losing a sure thing bet, to see that Palomino team creeping up, creeping up, cutting down his team's lead and still running well within themselves. He could see that Malloy had not pushed them to their capacity as yet. And every few moments, seconds they seemed, Regan's hat would come down kerwish on his head.

Harkness and Callahan, recovered from their jar, as they tried to arrest Malloy at the start of the race, were now among its most interested spectators. As they watched the pairs circle the track and noted that Malloy was gaining at every jump they almost forgot that it would be their first duty to arrest Malloy as soon as the race was finished. Official sang froid was lost in enthusiasm.

"Damnation, how that boy can ride," exclaimed Harkness. "Hope he wins this race. It will be a feather in his cap after the start he got. And By Jimminy, I think he is going to win, too. There's a lot of speed still in that team and Malloy ain't lettin' it all out yet."

"Too bad we got to arrest him, after what he

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is doing for Regan and what Miss La Farge did for him, I can't hardly think he's guilty."

"We ain't got no right to think about that. Gee, did you see that? Passed that second team on the back stretch like they was standin' still. Guess they are all run out. And I mind what he did for me. Saved my life in a buffalo stampede and brought me back to the ranch at the risk of his life and liberty. I ain't thanked him for that yet. But orders is orders and its just my luck to have to arrest him."

And now Dan was making his great bid for victory. Gradually, inch by inch he had cut down the lead of the bays. He had run the heads off the second team and they were still floundering in the straight away. They would have to fight it out with the other team for third place. Dan was right on the heels of the flying bays. Would the Palominos have the stamina to stick? They had been responsive to every demand so far. But they had made up forty extra yards and Dan had been forced to make most of his running in the middle of the track instead of on the pole where Morton's team had been all the way.

Dan had passed the second team in time to take advantage of the rail position as he rounded the back turn. Now he swung into the back stretch and out into the middle of the track again

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as he straightened out for the dash to the wire. Gathering up the lines tighter he crowded still farther forward over the withers of his flying team. The splendid pair caught his excitement. Far down the stretch hats were waving and men and women were jumping up and down on their seats, or their neighbors' seats, in their excitement. The Palominos were creeping up, they were certainly surely creeping up. Now their noses were at the flanks of the bays. No—the shoulders. Hurray, they were on even terms for the first time in the race. But the bays had plenty of grit and they were not all in yet. By a last mad spurt they forged ahead again.

The din was terrific. Regan was pounding Morton with his hat and Alberta was alternately jumping on the rail and hugging her father. Seventy thousand people were acting like lunatics in their excitement. Never so close a race in all the history of the Calgary Stampede. Would the Palominos be able to make up the half length that the bays had gained? Would the bays be able to maintain the gallant spurt to the wire?

Calling on all his horsemanship, urging his team with voice and rein, Dan fairly lifted the clay banks over the line—a neck ahead of the bays. He had won.

As he slowed up at the far turn, and jumped into the arms of the wildly cheering Bar O cow-

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boys, Dan saw Marie, her face wreathed in smiles and love trying to force her way through the crowd to him. He also saw two red coated figures coming from the other direction. They had no difficulty in making progress in the crowd. It opened up for them. As he sank into that bed of upraised hands and faces, Dan felt a hand on his shoulder.

“Dan Malloy, you are under arrest.”

CHAPTER XIX

THE AFTERMATH

So close was the finish, that many in the stands were undecided who had won, until the official nouncement and the announcer was unable to make that for some moments owing to the cheering of those who thought their team had won. But Regan was almost opposite the judges stand. He and Morton knew who had won. With a last bang on the head, Regan turned to the man who had urged him into the heartbreaking gamble. It was the first time he had addressed him since the angry speech he had made in answer to the charge of welching.

Morton was facing him, and as he stood, one step below Regan, he had no words to say, no congratulations, only black looks. Taking a cigar from his pocket, Regan reached out and to Morton's astonishment he grasped his jaw and trust the cigar deep into his mouth.

"Here, this is what you won, Morton. It's a burning shame, too."

In fury, Morton grabbed the cigar and hurled it to the floor. Then he ground it savagely under his heel. But Regan had hurried away to the track to congratulate and thank Malloy.

To his astonishment he found him between the

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two policemen. Undeterred, he pushed and pulled his way through the crush to his side. Grasping his hand, he shook it again and again.

"Malloy, I owe everything to you. I just don't know how to thank you. That was a wonderful ride. I'll say you know something about horses. No one in the world could have done what you did today with those Palominos. Now what can I do for you?"

"Nothin', I guess," said Malloy sadly. "I'm Dan Malloy all right and I'm admittin' it. But I didn't do what they say I done."

The crowd parted to let a slight figure clad in flowered silk through. Alberta made a flying leap and threw her arms around Dan's neck. Pulling herself up to his bent head she gave him a resounding kiss.

"Oh, Mr. Malloy, and to think we never suspected you," she cried.

"Well, these gentlemen still do," said Dan with the wisp of a smile.

Marie La Farge had not seen this affecting scene. Otherwise she might have had some misgiving as to the status of Dan's feeling for her. But now she came up, intent on telling Malloy the glad news that Neenah had given her. She, too, was surprised at seeing the constables in charge of her sweetheart, surprised but undis-

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mayed. She had the little maid by the hand and the key to the situation in her keeping.

"Neenah, tell them what you told me," she ordered.

As Neenah, scarcely five feet tall, looke^d up at the tall officers, and hemmed in as she was on every side by the crowd that had come rushing onto the track both to see and congratulate Malloy, and also to see what the policemen were doing with him, she expressed the futility of making them understand from the bottom of the well of humanity where she stood, by an eloquent gesture. Regan saw at once what she wanted. Picking her up bodily, he placed her on the railing of the fence about the track, where she could look down, not up at the audience to which she was to make her momentous statement. As she caught her balance she looked for a moment over the heads of the crowd. Her beady black eyes grew wide with excitement. Then they snapped with sudden anger. She was looking directly into the face of Fred Burgess.

Burgess, immensely relieved by the sight of the sight of the constables taking Malloy into custody and impelled by the desire of Nellie to see the fun, had come down to the track with about a thousand other curiosity seekers. But he had made the worst mistake of his life. The sight of the wrathful little Neenah, perched up there on

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the fence, filled him with misgiving, and before he could move, Neenah had shouted,

"There he is, the man who keel La Farge. Fred Burgess. I see heem on porch. Now I tell, I, Neenah. Malloy no keel nobody, Burgess the one."

The accusation was dramatic. Neenah, like an avenging fury, hurled herself from the fence toward Burgess. The policemen jumped up to get a better look and as they let go of him, Dan made a break in the same direction that Neenah had taken. He cleared the fence at a bound. Following Neenah closely he saw a figure that he recognized by his peculiar run as the one at whom he had shot back there on the porch of the La Farge ranch.

Burgess stood not on the order of his going. Neither did he take the time or trouble to say good bye to Nellie. He just went. Tearing through the crowd he passed out the gate of the paddock on the dead run. Jumping into a wagon, he hurled the occupant out onto the ground, gathered up the lines and struck the horse a savage blow with the whip. He went out of the gate of Exhibition Park as though his nemesis were after him, as indeed it was.

Seeing his man escaping, Dan jumped on a horse carelessly left by his rider beside the gate and cut the corner so fine that he took the gate

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with him, hurling three men who had been using it as an observation post into a struggling pile of arms and legs. Down the road he flew after the careening wagon. But this horse was no race horse. He could not gain on the desperate Burgess. Mile after mile he covered holding his own but unable to close the gap between them, on the road into the hills.

Suddenly, as he dashed around a sharp turn in the road, he plunged slam bang into a motley crew as ever were let loose on the Canadian highway. Overdressed cowboys with yellow shirts and too-deeply fringed chaps. Ladies in short skirts, men in lumber jack shirts and in leggings. Men with megaphones and a queer assortment of screens and instruments that looked to his startled eyes like gatling guns.

As his horse reared, plunged and jarred to a sudden stop, he saw the wagon that he had been so madly chasing, going end over end down a steep bank leading to a swift flowing brook a hundred feet below. Without a moment's hesitation, Dan jumped from his horse's back down the bank. Leaping, falling, sliding and rolling he fetched up at the bottom on his head beside what had been a wagon a moment ago. Beside it was the still form of Burgess.

As he righted himself and sat up rubbing his eyes to get the sand out of them, a voice ordered,

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“Hold it. Steady now. Look over at your man. That’s fine. Cut.”

For an instant Dan thought he had gone out of his head. He had heard those words before somewhere, or words like them. And sure enough there was a camera pointed squarely at him and a man in puttees coming over to assist him.

“Gee, that’s the greatest flop I ever saw in my life and every bit of it right in the camera. Worth a million dollars of this firm’s money. Sammy couldn’t have made it as realistic in a million years. How did you two happen to fall into the picture so opportunely, anyway, and who are you. There’s a job waiting in Hollywood for a guy like you. Hope you’re not hurt.” he rattled on as Dan sat there stupefied.

“I used to be an actor once, but I wasn’t acting this time. I was after a murderer and I got him. His horse must have got scared of the reflectors.”

Then he realized that his own business was not finished. Turning to the figure that had preceded him down the steep incline, he straightened out the crushed Burgess. As he did so a shout rang out from the road above.

“Have you got him, Dan? I’m coming down.”

And there on the bank of the little brook, in the presence of the two policemen and Dan Malloy, who had hunted him a year, and the

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interested company of actors, camera men and movie directors, Burgess made his confession.

Leaving him there in the care of Callahan, Harkness and Dan Malloy climbed the bank to the road above just as an auto with Regan and Marie La Farge rolled up and stopped.

"Malloy is all clear, Miss La Farge. Burgess confessed everything."

But Marie wasn't even listening to him. A young man in striped trousers, such as one wears with a Prince Albert suit, white sneaks such as one wears at tennis, a yellow poker dot shirt such as negro washerwomen wear to do laundry in and a handkerchief such as no Roman ever wore to a bear baiting, was occupying all of her attention. Harkness, seeing the futility of official announcement just at that time, turned away with a quiet smile. Not so the ubiquitous movie director. He tapped the young man on the shoulder.

"Say, Kid," he announced, "I'd sure like to take you back to Hollywood with me to play in Westerns. Can you act?"

"Can he act?" said Regan with scorn in his voice. "Say, that chap just closed a run of three hundred and sixty-five nights in the role of Chuck Jones in a play that nobody in Calgary will ever forget to his dying day."

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“Gee, Whitaker,” exclaimed the director, startled for once out of his blasé manner, “That was some performance. And I thought Calgary was a one week stand at most. What play was that, Mister?”

“Spuds.”

The End.



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